The Caucasus

This is a fascinating new survey of the Caucasus which provides a unified narrative history of this complex and turbulent region at the borderlands of Europe, Asia and the Middle East, from prehistory to the present.For thousands of years the Caucasus has formed a hub of intersecting routes of migration, invasion, trade and culture, and a geographical bridge between Europe and Asia, subject to recurring imperial invasion. Drawing on sources in English and Russian, and translations from Persian and Arabic, this authoritative study centres on the region's indigenous peoples, including Abkhazians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Chechens, Daghestanis, Circassians and Georgians, and their relations with outsiders who still play a part in the life of the region today. The book presents a critical view of the role of Russian imperialism in the Caucasian countries, and the desperate struggle of most of its native peoples in their efforts to establish a precarious independence.

James Forsyth is former Reader and Head of the Department of Russian at the University of Aberdeen. His previous publications include *A History of the Peoples of Siberia* (Cambridge, 1992).

The Caucasus

A History

James Forsyth

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So far as first-hand knowledge of the countries of the Caucasus is concerned, when Russia was still the USSR the Moscow government placed rigid limits on travel, which was supervised by the state-run agency Inturist. Now, however,

viewed in retrospect, the tours it provided seem very good – allowing foreign travellers to visit the capital cities and some of the most interesting historical sites in North Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as I did with my wife and colleague Jo Newcombe. (Jo also provides my first line of efficient support in my all-too-frequent computer problems.) In North Caucasus we were taken to Osetia and the Baksan gorge among the foothills of Mount Elbrus, but no doubt the best tour was the bus journey from Vladikavkaz along the old Russian Military Highway over the mountain passes to Tbilisi. Thereafter we toured Armenia via Lake Sevan to Yerevan, with Echmiadzin Cathedral and St Ripsime church, and subsequently another itinerary to the ancient, partly rock-hewn monastery at Geghard and the restored Hellenic temple near Garni. Quite different was our visit to Baku in Azerbaijan, where we were guided by the late Professor Ayaz Adil oglu Efendiev, whom we had got to know well during his stay in Aberdeen in connection with the oil industry. Thanks to Aberdeen's oil connection I also got to know Ketevan Wright, who has helped me greatly, as has Zaza Abashidze, with Georgian publications and photographs, by reading my chapters and providing a personal telephone enquiry service on matters Georgian.

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Note from the publisher on stylistic conventions

Translations from Russian, French and German are the author's; translations from other languages are from the original source. In the main text simplified transliteration systems have been used for most languages with the English-speaking reader in mind. In Russian, for example, soft signs and hard signs are omitted. Diacritics on vowels have generally been dropped from Arabic and Persian words. Turkish consonants have been amended to indicate pronunciation to the English-speaking reader. Ejectives in Georgian are, however, included. Finally, some Anglicised place-names vary according to contemporary practice. Where different names apply to a single location over time, often depending on who controlled or ruled an area (such as Tiflis/Tbilisi or Trapezunt/Trebizond/Trabzon), the appropriate form is used.

Introduction

The Caucasus was one of the most colourful and varied regions of the Russian Empire, and indeed has been called 'In respect of ethnography…one of the strangest and most interesting regions of the globe.'[1] It has also been one of the most turbulent, its political and cultural history reflecting a complex succession of peoples and influences from many neighbouring countries flooding in or passing through. It links Europe and Asia (so far as these two great cultural realms can be demarcated geographically) and for thousands of years has been a region where many routes of migration, invasion, trade and cultural influences intersect. This book is an attempt to present a many-sided, integrated account of Caucasian history from a viewpoint which is not Russocentric but concentrates instead upon the region's indigenous peoples. This is particularly necessary at the present time because of the relative inaccessibility of the Caucasus and the restrictions on travel there – which, because of Russian domination and continuing unrest, are almost as severe now as they were before the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

By the 1900s many Russians lived in the Caucasus, but before the seventeenth century no part of the Caucasus had ever belonged to Russia. In this respect it resembled India, where imperialist penetration by European states did not begin until the sixteenth century. Although the Caucasus, of all the colonial possessions of the Russian Empire, justly enjoyed a special reputation for its natural beauty, ethnic diversity and ancient cultures, its name as a geographical and historical concept awoke relatively little resonance in Europe and North America. It was isolated, having no border with any Western country and relatively few relations with Europe, from which it was fenced off by Turkey and Russia. Thus – despite early contacts with Greeks and Romans, the existence of early Christian churches in Armenia and Georgia, and the proximity of Greek, Roman and subsequently Italian colonies on the Black Sea – to Europeans in general the Caucasus remained remote in culture and ways of life, and such knowledge about it as did exist in the wider world was due mainly to its annexation to the Russian Empire. So far as continental affinities are concerned, Caucasia was allotted by some map-makers to Europe, by others to Asia, and histories of Europe usually gave it little, if any, space.

The Caucasus, with its towering mountain range and deep gorges, was always rather a 'wild' place, austere, unpredictable and dangerous for travellers, but since 1988 it has been more violent than at any time since Russia's nineteenth-century wars of subjugation, with ongoing conflicts in Highland Karabagh (between Azerbaijanis and Armenians), in Abkhazia and Osetia (against the Georgian government) and in Chechenia (against the Russian government), as well as inter-ethnic violence within the Georgian republic, and brutal Soviet government assaults on peaceful demonstrators in Georgia, Azerbaijan and North Caucasus. While the invaders of the Caucasus in earlier ages – Mongols, Persians, Turks and Russians – were cruel in their lust for plunder, slaves or imperial power, the commanders of the late twentieth-century Russian war machine, with their modern weaponry employed in flattening the city of Groznyy in 1990–1 and in other ways ruthlessly destroying Chechen people, have shown even less respect for human life than their predecessors. The present-day situation in the Caucasus is an anachronism – a lingering decolonization struggle waged by subject communities against their former imperial masters.

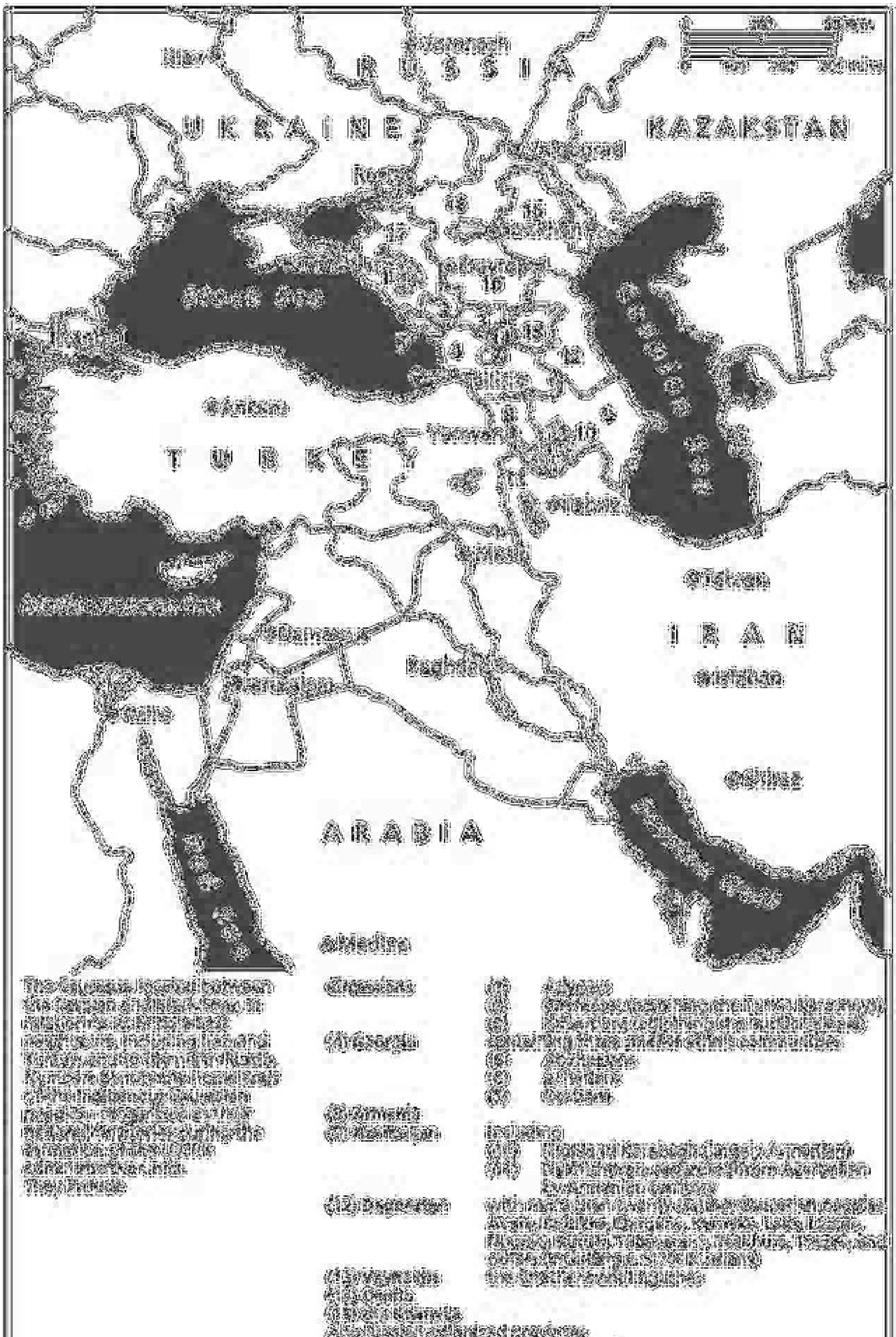
This book is not about the Russian people and the empire-state which they created, but about a region and its indigenous, non-Russian peoples, who have been used as the material of empire-building by Russia's rulers, but who in their own right merit attention and consideration at least as much as the Russian or other intruding imperial invaders. One aspect of the book is the relations between the native peoples of the Caucasus and the metropolitan power which still imposes its rule over those whose territories lie north of the great mountain range. Those who live to the south of the Great Caucasus enjoy a precarious independence, but Russians were not the only outsiders who made their mark on the Caucasus during its long history: it involves many neighbouring peoples who to varying degrees impinged on the Caucasus as friends or enemies. Relations with these outsiders were neither simple nor always exclusively detrimental to the native inhabitants of the Caucasus, and they still play an important part in its life.

The Caucasus – despite its strategic location between two virtually land-locked seas, clustered around serious mountain barriers with few passes, through which land routes link Asia with eastern Europe – has never received the attention it deserves in histories of Europe or Asia. Late twentieth-century studies of the Middle East made little reference to the Caucasus, their regional maps mainly drawing a line at the USSR frontier on the river Araxes, leaving what lay to the north mysteriously blank and nameless[2] or, worse, labelling it simply 'Soviet Union' or calling everything north of the mountain range 'Russia' – which it certainly is not. On recent visits to the local branch of a well-known bookshop the author has regularly found half a dozen current books on the Middle East which conform to this pattern.

In previous times this ignoring of the countries of the Caucasus reflected a tacit political agreement not to upset the Soviet Union's rulers by questioning the situation in South and North Caucasus, but to leave the fate of its native peoples entirely at the disposal of Soviet Russia. My intention is to reintegrate the Caucasus with its Middle Eastern historical context, while relating it culturally (in particular Georgia and Armenia) to Europe rather than Asia. Another aspect involved here is religion, since pro-communist sympathy is not the only bias one encounters: some specialists on the Middle East have been apologists for Islam, especially, in some cases, the Turks. Less recognition has been awarded to Iran; indeed it has been pointed out by an Armenian author that ‘Iranian influence throughout the breadth of the Caucasian lands is the aspect of the culture of this region that has received the least attention from scholars’, despite the ubiquity and depth of Iranian influence in its material and spiritual cultures, attesting to ‘the tenacity of ancient traditions with a heavy Iranian admixture in Caucasia, even into the twentieth century’.[3] The author of the present book can make no claim to being an Iranist, but when he began this study he found that the frequent necessity of making reference to Persia was inescapable. The time was favourable in that it was soon after the publication of a large body of new writing about Iranian history, including much about the Caucasus, e.g. in the impressive multi-volume *Cambridge History of Iran* (which I have plundered shamelessly, but I hope with due acknowledgment), many works by R. N. Frye, and the later volumes of the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Although I have only the rudiments of Georgian, this was also the time when a well-edited Russian translation of the history of Georgia by Vakhushti Bagrationi, originally completed in Georgian in 1745, was published, and is probably superior to the only version available to British historians of Georgia – a French translation – up to 1970, as was another history of Georgia written in Russian by Davit Bagrationi (1767–1819), the son of the last king of Kartli-Kakheti. My knowledge of Georgian is rudimentary, but gradually, since chancing upon a Russian *Teach Yourself Georgian* in a Moscow bookshop in about 1962,[4] I have become competent at least to use bilingual dictionaries in Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani, as well as an excellent Persian–Russian dictionary.[5] In general, my knowledge of Russian gave me the key to a vast field of publications about the non-Russian peoples of the Russian Empire/Soviet Union – much contaminated with ideological bias, and containing frequent evasions, omissions and lies – but particularly rewarding where an author had succeeded in salvaging passages almost free from (although seldom counter to) the Communist Party line. From 1989, under Mikhail Gorbachov and ‘perestroyka’, there came – particularly from the countries of the North Caucasus – a stream of informative publications not suffering from perversion of scholarship, and often dealing explicitly with previously banned topics. These resulted from the opening of the state's formerly secret archives, which shed light on events during the terrible period from 1917 to the 1980s, such as the collectivization of agriculture, the man-made famine of the 1930s, the mass incarceration of ordinary citizens in appalling concentration camps, and the wholesale deportation of smaller Caucasian nations to Central Asia in 1943. As Russian had become the normal medium for scholarly publications in the USSR’s smaller ethnic territories, many such studies, based on previously suppressed writings, became accessible to Russian-speakers in the 1990s.

The territory covered by this book cannot be limited to the possessions of the former Russian Empire/Soviet Union, because its historical ‘neighbourhood’ is considerably wider. While the main focus is upon the lands of the native peoples of the North Caucasus foothills and plain (the Circassians, Osets, Chechens, Ingush, Kumuks and other peoples of Daghestan) and those of the plateaux and valleys south of the mountain range (principally the Abkhazians, Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis), a considerably wider geographical perspective is required to give due acknowledgment to the outsiders with whom the Caucasian peoples had prolonged relations, peaceful or warlike, over the centuries – primarily the Greeks, Persians, Russians and Turks.

Until the 1990s the southern political limit of the Caucasus coincided with the frontier of the USSR – a barrier which ensured the rigid isolation of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (what Russians called ‘Transcaucasia’) from its southern neighbours Iran, Turkey and the rest of the Middle East – and which Western states generally avoided questioning. (A particularly warped situation existed on the Soviet–Iranian frontier on the river Kura: to the north lay one Azerbaijan – a Soviet republic with Baku as its capital – and south of the river was another Azerbaijan – a province of Iran centred on Tabriz. No contact existed across the river.) In addition, since the Second World War another barrier farther north, following the line of the mountain ridge – the frontier of the Rossiyan Federative Republic (RSFSR) – had separated ‘Transcaucasia’ from its neighbours in North Caucasus (the inhabitants of the Adygey, Kabarda-Balkar, Karachay-Cherkes, North Osetian, Chechen-Ingush and Daghestani national territories, as well as that dominated until the eighteenth century by the Tatars of the Crimean Khanate). Such political realities make it necessary to widen our perspective on the Caucasus region by extending its historico-geographical limits in several directions: farther north, to the near-confluence of the Don and Volga at Volgograd, in order to accommodate the grasslands (steppes) of the migratory peoples; and farther south, to embrace parts of Turkey and Iran, across which Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan always had trading contacts with Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Arabia. Similarly, it is realistic to expand the cultural-historical limits of the Caucasus on an east–west axis, extending them west into Anatolia (formerly dominated by Greece and the Roman Empire and then subject to Ottoman Turkey), and eastward in recognition of the very great part played in Caucasia's history by Persia and the adjacent deserts which also lay open to the equestrian Turkish and Mongol peoples of Central Asia (see Map 1).

RUSSIA
UKRAINE
KAZAKSTAN
Voronezh
Kiev
Volgograd
Rostov
Stavropol
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Ankara
TURKEY
Yerevan
Tbilisi
Tabriz
Mosul
Tehran
IRAN
Isfahan
Damascus
Baghdad
Jerusalem
Cairo
Shiraz
ARABIA
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Mediterranean Sea
Medina
(4) Georgia
(8) Armenia
(9) Azerbaijan
including
(12) Daghestan

Map 1 The Caucasus, its peoples and neighbourhood.

Taken strictly as the isthmus between the Black and Caspian Seas, populated by the indigenous peoples grouped around the Great Caucasus range and the Armenian plateau, the Caucasus covers some 250,000 square miles – considerably less than Iran (623,846 square miles) but comparable with Turkey (296,185) and bigger than Iraq (168,200) or Syria (70,692). The wider field of activity proposed above for the purposes of this book is greater: approximately 1,500 miles from north to south and 2,000 miles from west to east, including the Caspian Sea and much of the Black Sea (as far as the Crimean peninsula), as well as the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean. Within this area – which includes not only the ex-Soviet states and national territories of the Caucasus proper, but also the largely Russified provinces of Stavropol and Krasnodar and parts of Astrakhan, Rostov and the Crimean peninsula, with the addition of the Azerbaijanian province of Iran – the total number of native Caucasians is approximately 22.9 million. Obviously the multiplicity of peoples now inhabiting the region makes it impossible to do justice to them all: the Caucasus is home to more than fifty distinct ethno-linguistic communities, ranging in magnitude from nearly 7 million (the Azerbaijanis) to a few thousand (some peoples of Daghestan).

This number is made up as shown in the table (territories in descending order of their percentage of indigenous Caucasian (non-Russian) peoples, aggregated in each case).[6]

	Total population	**Indigenous peoples**	**Percentage of total (in descending order)**
Armenia	3,304,776	3,235,216	97.9
Azerbaijan	7,021,178	6,513,268	92.8
Georgia	5,400,841	4,946,243	91.6
Daghestan	1,802,188	1,527,264	84.7
Chechenia-Ingushia	1,270,429	945,831	74.4
North Osetia	632,428	415,252	65.7
Kabarda-Balkaria	753,531	466,609	61.9
Kalmykia	322,579	178,662	55.4
Karachay-Cherkesia	414,970	221,557	53.4
Adygeya	432,046	109,598	25.4

	Total population	**Indigenous peoples**	**Percentage of total (in descending order)**
Stavropol*	2,410,379	360,265	14.9
Astrakhan	991,521	96,220	9.7
Krasnodar*	4,620,876	317,983	6.9
Rostov-on-Don	4,292,291	102,732	2.4
Iran – Azerbaijanis	c. 3,000,000		
Iran – Talysh	21,000		

* In addition to the Karachay-Cherkes and Adygey territories.

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[1] K. Baedeker, *Russia, with Teheran, Port Arthur, and Peking: Handbook for Travellers*, Leipzig, 1914 [reprint, London, 1971], p. 440.

[2] E.g. P. Mansfield, ed., *The Middle East: a Political and Economic Survey*, 4th edn, London, 1973, map at end; B. Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History from the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, London, 1995 and paperback reprints, pp. 414–17; and many others.

[3] N. G. Garsoyan, ‘Iran and Caucasia’, in R. G. Suny, ed., *Transcaucasia: Nationalism and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*, Ann Arbor, 1983, pp. 7, 23.

[4] V. G. Tṣuleyskiri and P̣. G. Chanishvili, *Samouchitel gruzinskogo yazyka*, 4th, revised and augmented edn, Tbilisi, 1960.

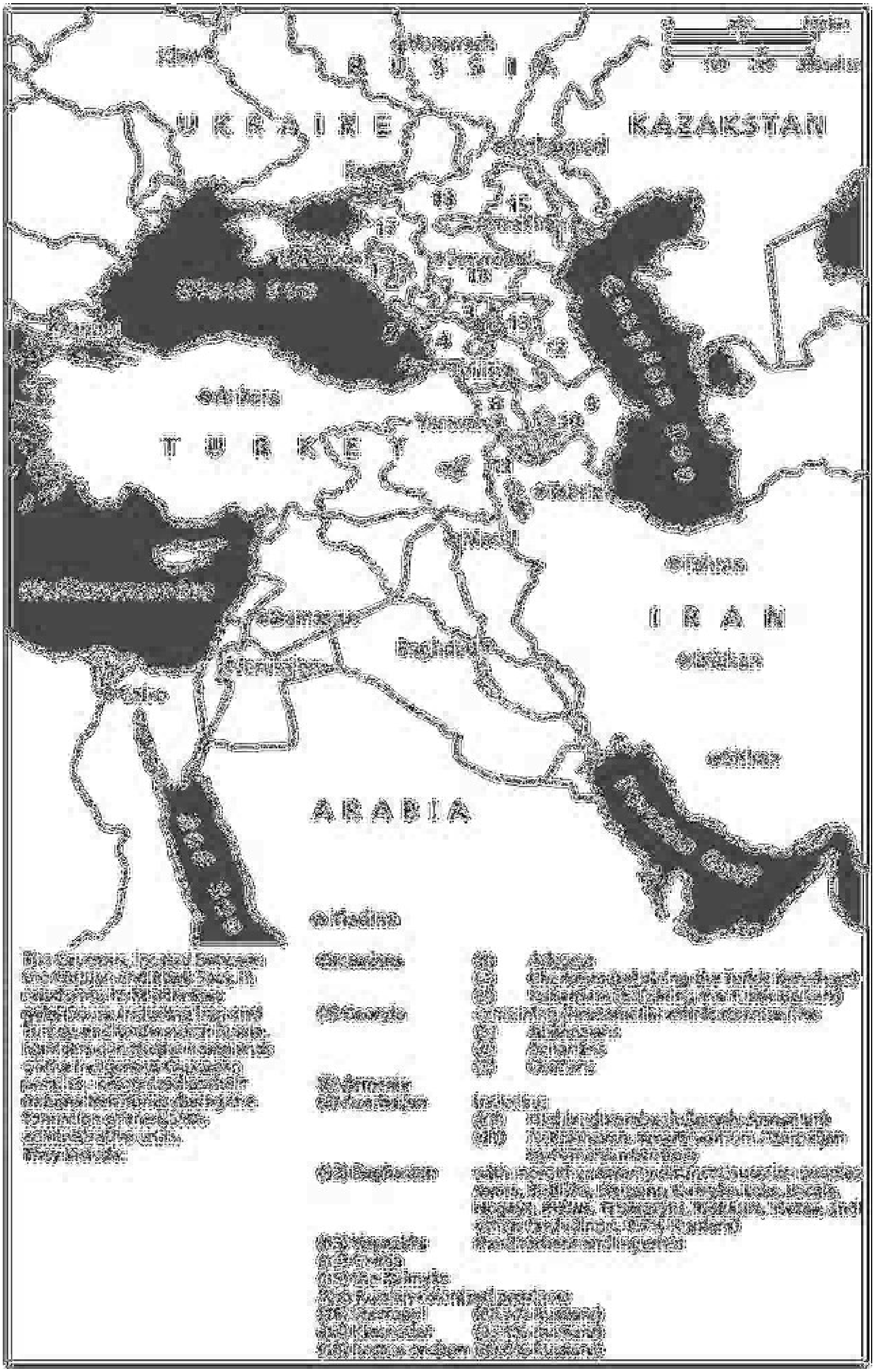
[5] *Persidsko-russkiy slovar/farhang fārsī-berusi*, compiled by Yu. A. Rubinchik, *et al.*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1983.

[6] Sources: E. Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, Princeton, 1982, p. 12; B. Comrie, *The Languages of the Soviet Union*, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 49, 162; Russia, Statisticheskiy Komitet Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv, *Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1989 g.*, vol. VII, part 1 [microtext edition by East View Publications, Minneapolis, 1993].

1 Caucasian origins

The regional setting

The Caucasus lies on the north-western edge of the Middle East,[1] where the earliest urban civilizations developed from the second millennium BC. To the south, in the fertile plain between the Euphrates and Tigris, the great powers of the region included Akkadia, Assyria, Babylon and later Persia. It was below the south-facing slopes of the Taurus and Zagros mountains and the coast of Syria that the civilizations of the 'Fertile Crescent' developed (see Map 2), where cereals were first cultivated for food, and as trade routes developed between the growing number of cities the first known alphabets were invented.[2] Farther north, in the mountains of present-day Armenia and Georgia, people began extracting and forging copper, then iron, for weapons and tools. Caucasian communities such as the Georgians and Albanians were not at the centre of these developments, but were well placed to adopt them and participate in the region's flourishing trade relations. By the eighth century BC mariners from Greece sailing along the Black Sea coasts had founded colonies in north-western Caucasus; and in the sixth century the city-states in Asia Minor fell under the sway of the Persian Empire, whose western frontier stood on the Aegean Sea for some 200 years. Meanwhile the Caucasus entered into Greek mythology: Colchis, where the Argonauts sought the Golden Fleece, was the western coastal plain of today's Georgia, and it was on the Caucasus mountains above that Zeus chained Prometheus to punish him for creating mankind and giving them fire.[3]


Kiev
Voronezh
RUSSIA
UKRAINE
KAZAKSTAN
Volgograd
Rostov
Astrakhan
Stavropol
Krasnodar
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Istanbul
Ankara
TURKEY
Tbilisi
Yerevan
Baku
Tabriz
Mosul
Tehran
IRAN
Isfahan
Mediterranean
Damascus
Baghdad
Jerusalem
Cairo
ARABIA
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Shiraz
Medina
Mecca
The Caucasus, located between
the Caspian and Black Seas
They include:
(4) Georgia
(8) Armenia
(9) Azerbaijan
(12) Daghestan
including:

Map 2 The Caucasus in relation to the earliest agriculture, the ‘Fertile Crescent’, c. 8,000 BC. The south ‘Russian’ provinces of Krasnodar, Stavropol and Rostov, along with the Kalmyk Republic and Volgograd province, share the same temperate climate and natural vegetation as North Caucasus and the south Ukrainian provinces to the west.

Fire has strong associations in the Caucasus, as the first observed evidence of petroleum-bearing rocks underlying much of Persia and Iraq were the ‘eternal fires’ which in places were a conspicuous feature of the landscape. These flares arising from surface seepage of oil and gas were widespread around Baku, and aroused comment from early travellers.[4] In our own day the importance of this persists as, after 200 years of subjection to Russia the now independent state of Azerbaijan has become the heir to petroleum resources under the Caspian which bring it the status, and the international pressures, of a force in world oil politics.[5]

Fire also suggests the religion of Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism – often referred to as ‘fire-worship’ – which was one of many cultural influences reaching the peoples of the Caucasus from Persia over the centuries.[6] ‘Of the four great fires dominating the Zoroastrian world, the one particularly associated with the King of Kings [i.e. the shah of Persia] was located at Ganjak in Azerbaijan.’[7] A tangible monument of Zoroastrianism survives near Baku, where ‘naphtha gas’ burned continuously from natural vents in the rock, and a fire-temple built in pre-Islamic times was restored by Parsees from India in the eighteenth century. The Persian dimension in the history of the Caucasus, which has been comparatively neglected by scholars because of the dominance of Christian and Muslim themes, is an important element in its cultural heritage, evident not only in monumental sculpture and gold and silver vessels, but also in the influence of Persian on the Armenian and Georgian languages, and the themes and style of Georgian medieval poetry exhibited in Shota Rustaveli's *The Man in the Tiger Skin*. Even the name of the revered centre of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Mtskheta, formerly Armazis Tsikhe, means 'Ormuzd castle', from Ahura Mazda, the supreme god of the early Persians.[8] Because of this strong influence of Persia as a political and cultural force inseparable from the Caucasus, its history will figure conspicuously in this book.

The Great Caucasus range forms the backbone of the Caspian–Black Sea isthmus, running some 600 miles from Novorossiysk in the north-west to near Baku in the south-east, with more than thirty peaks over 10,000 feet, including Elbrus (18,480 feet), Dykhtau, Shkara, Jangitau and Kazbek, which are higher than any in the Alps or the southern Rockies. North of the mountains lie the Kuban and Caspian steppes – open grasslands stretching northward to the river Volga, the Ural mountains and the remote Russian forests. South of the Great Caucasus lie the rugged summits and plateaux of Armenia and Azerbaijan, where in the nineteenth century the Russian Empire's frontier with Turkey and Iran was established on the river Araxes, which rises in the same region of eastern Turkey (Anatolia) as the Tigris and Euphrates, but flows eastward to the Caspian Sea.

The Caucasus lies at approximately the same latitude (40 °N) as Italy, Spain, New York and Tashkent, but the specific location of the mountains, standing in isolation between the Black Sea and the Caspian, creates big contrasts in the climate of surrounding regions. Clouds accumulating over it produce heavy rain and snowfall, especially on the south-western side, so that much of western Georgia – the Rioni basin and the coastal plain of Megrelia (Greek ‘Colchis’) – is so fertile that grapes, citrus fruits and tea can be grown, but in winter the highlands of Svaneti are subject to destructive avalanches. In contrast, to the east of Tbilisi (widely known by its Persian name ‘Tiflis’), the plain of the Kura, stretching towards Baku and the Caspian, is very arid, with much salty desert in the eastern part of what was ‘Russian’ Azerbaijan, so that, while grapes and cereals can be grown, they require irrigation. South of the lower Kura and Araxes in Persian Azerbaijan the arid Mughan steppe gives way to luxuriant deciduous forest fringing the south Caspian coast, which includes one of Persia's most densely populated areas, Mazandaran. As only some 5 per cent of Iran's total territory is cultivable (55 per cent is desert) its north-western region, Azerbaijan, is important because it contains Iran's largest areas of fertile soil.[9] The Armenian plateau has temperatures as low as –46 °C in winter, but up to +42 °C in summer, and the cultivation of grapes, fruit, tobacco, maize and wheat depends largely on irrigation, while, as everywhere in the Caucasus, valley and upland pastures support cattle and sheep.

On the northern side of the Great Caucasus range the abundant rainfall is carried off by two great river systems. The Kuban, rising at over 10,000 feet on Mount Elbrus, sweeps northward through Circassia, fed by a score of tributaries rushing down from the mountains, before turning west to reach the Azov Sea near Kerch Strait. On the east the mountains are drained by the river Terek and numerous tributaries joining it in its northward course from Mount Kazbegi through Vladikavkaz to the sharp eastward bend near Mozdok; thereafter, in Chechenia, it receives a dozen more rivers feeding into the Sunzha, before dispersing across a marshy delta into the Caspian. North of the Terek the grasslands, which are suitable only for grazing, deteriorate eastward into dry steppe and semi-desert on the bleak Caspian coast, and its only rivers, the Kuma and Manych, often run dry. The climate in North Caucasus is temperate, with deciduous forests in the plains and foothills of Circassia and Chechenia. The fertile black-earth steppes extending westward from Stavropol to Rostov-on-Don produce wheat and maize, as well as rice and grapes on the lower Kuban. Among the mountains themselves are areas of high summer pasture, and in the narrow valleys of Daghestan the main traditional occupation is herding sheep and goats, with subsistence agriculture and fruit-growing on the terraced steep slopes.[10]

The northern limit of the Caucasus region can be drawn along the lower Volga and Don, which diverge east and west from the 75-mile neck of land between them (in former days providing a portage for boats, and now connected by the Volga–Don canal) and flow towards the Caspian and Azov Seas respectively. To the west only the narrow strait of Kerch separates the Kuban steppe from the Crimean peninsula, through which lies one road linking the Caucasus and Europe. Although the Caucasus range with its many glaciers offers few easy passes, overland travel between countries south and north of the mountains has always been possible along the narrow coastal plain skirting the Caspian and, with more difficulty, by the precipitous Black Sea coast, while both sides afford nautical contacts with Central Asia and Persia on the one hand, and Asia Minor and Europe on the other. Most routes across the Great Caucasus were suitable only for pack-horses, the one exception being the pass known in Russian as the ‘Georgian Military Highway’, linking North Caucasus with Georgia by way of the Darial gorge (Persian ‘Dar-e Alan’ – the Alans’ Gate), where the road climbs to 7,800 feet before descending through the Aragvi valley to Tbilisi. The Great Caucasus range forms a formidable, unequivocal barrier separating the wide plains and hills of Circassia and Eurasian steppe in the north, from the rugged hills and plateaux to in the south, where it is harder to define the limits of the Caucasus. Beyond the river Mtkvari (or Kura) the Lesser Caucasus massif is a continuation of the folds and faults of the mountain system which begins in the Pyrenees and Alps and snakes eastward across southern Europe. In Anatolia it divides to form ranges along present-day Turkey's north and south coasts, which coalesce in a jumble of intersecting ridges in the Armenian tableland with its plateaux and extinct volcanoes. With an average altitude of 1,500–1,800 metres, this region towers above the surrounding lands like a ‘mountain island’. This core of historical Armenia, beginning at Mount Ararat, encloses the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris, and many other fertile valleys and plains. For human settlement and cultivation, however, the climate is harsh, with hot summers giving little rain, and very cold winters with heavy snowfalls.[11] The southern edge of these rugged uplands forms a natural frontier, falling abruptly to the Euphrates–Tigris plain of Syria and Iraq, while beyond Armenia and Persian Azerbaijan the roughly parallel Zagros mountain ranges run eastwards into Baluchistan and Afghanistan and eventually the Himalayas and India.

The present-day southern political frontiers of the states of Georgia and Armenia were established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries between Russia's empire-builders and the rulers of Iran and Turkey. Various khanates to the east, from Talesh in the south to Shirvan in the north, were taken from Persia and eventually constituted as the Republic of Azerbaijan, while the Black Sea coastal khanate of Batumi was recovered for Georgia from the Ottoman Empire, as were, until the First World War, the Armenian borderlands around Kars. Thus, during the twentieth century, from the geopolitical standpoint the Caucasus region in the south stopped short at the river Araks (Greek ‘Araxes’), leaving most of the Armenian highlands marooned in Turkey, while historical Azerbaijan, the ancient Persian borderland of Atropatene, remained in Iran. Since the partial disintegration of Russia's empire in 1991, however, it makes sense to redefine Caucasia's southern limit to reflect geographical, historical and political facts – principally its strong links with Persia and Turkey – by locating it farther south than the now discredited frontier of the Russian Empire/Soviet Union, to follow the edge of the Eastern Taurus and Zagros mountains, and embrace the whole of historical Azerbaijan and Armenia. Its core remains the Great Caucasus – historically both a nigh-impassable barrier and a refuge and fortress against invasion from various directions.

Peoples of the Caucasus and their languages

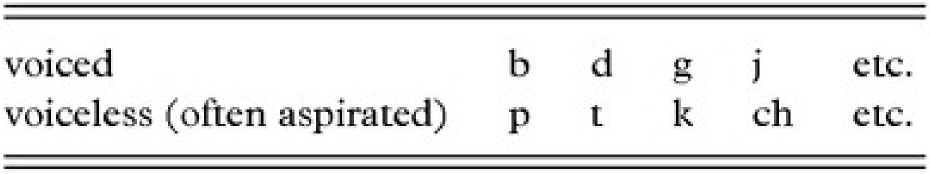
The ethnic diversity of the Caucasus is only hinted at by its present-day political divisions. The republics lying to the south of the Great Caucasus have three principal religions – in Azerbaijan Shiᶜah Islam, in Georgia Orthodox Christianity, and in Armenia the Gregorian Apostolic Church. Within these republics there are several smaller national homelands. Georgia has three designated ethnic territories: on the Black Sea border with Turkey is Acḥaria, whose population is Georgian but largely Sunni Muslim;[12] in the north-west is Abkhazia, with a language quite different from Georgian, and cultural affiliations with Circassia; to the north of Tbilisi, centred on Tskhinvali, lies the small enclave in Georgia of the Osetian people – speakers of an Iranian language – which in the high Caucasus meets the North Osetian Republic, lying within the Russian Republic. The lands of the Armenians and Azerbaijanis form a complicated mosaic: Nakhchavan, now part of Azerbaijan, is separated from it by Armenia's Syunik province, while to the east of this corridor Highland Karabagh with its predominantly Armenian population lies administratively within Azerbaijan. The Armenian Republic – a small remnant of the Armenians' formerly much larger territory – does not contain any other designated peoples, but along its borders with Azerbaijan there are several small Azerbaijanian enclaves within Armenia, and one Armenian district within Azerbaijan.

All territory to the north of the Great Caucasus lies today within the 'Russian Federation', and consequently is all too often simply marked 'Russia' on maps – although, far from being ethnically homogeneous, here too there is a patchwork of nations. Mainly west of the Terek lie the Russian-dominated 'autonomous' territories of North Osetia, and Kabarda-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkesia and Adygeya, which together correspond to historical Circassia – the land of the Cherkes (in their own language 'Adyg') peoples. East of the Terek are Chechenia and Ingushia, and to the south Daghestan, the latter a region with many small nations, of which the most numerous are the Avars, Dargos, Kumuks and Lezgis. Despite the name 'Daghestan' (from the Turkish *dagh* 'mountain', and Persian *stān* 'place') half of present-day Daghestan is lowland – the Kumuk plain on the Caspian coast, spreading northward into the Terek delta.[13] To the south and west, much less accessible than this, tower the rugged mountains of Daghestan proper, with its numerous small ethnic regions. To the north of Daghestan the inhospitable desert-steppe stretching to the Volga delta is the territory of the Kalmyks, remnants of a Mongolian people who settled here only in the seventeenth century, while to the north-west, in Russia's Stavropol, Krasnodar and Rostov provinces, most of the inhabitants of the formerly Circassian

North Caucasian plain are now Russians and Ukrainians, who have immigrated since the sixteenth century.

More than fifty indigenous nationalities, each with its own language, live in the Caucasus. Some have possibly been there for more than 3,000 years: the Georgians, Abkhazians, Circassians, Chechens, Avars, Laks and thirty others, all speaking languages unrelated to any outside the Caucasus; and the Armenians, whose language, like English, Russian and Persian, belongs to the Indo-European family.

The autochthonous Caucasian languages, which (apart from loanwords introduced in recent times) bear no relationship to either Indo-European or Turkic, differ from each other greatly in vocabulary, grammar and sounds. All are remarkably rich in consonants: in contrast with English, in which plosive consonants occur in pairs, e.g.



voiced	b	d	g	j	etc.
voiceless (often aspirated)	p	t	k	ch	etc.

thus distinguishing such words as bill/pill, den/ten, Garry/carry, jar/char, etc., the Caucasian languages (and even the Indo-European Armenian and Osetian languages spoken in the Caucasus) have a third variety, the ‘ejective’ consonants – indicated here by a dot below the letter p ṭ ḳ or cḥ – which are accompanied by a characteristic glottal emphasis.[14]

The lexical variety of Caucasian languages can be seen, for instance, in the numerals 'one, two, three', which are (approximately) *erti*, *ori*, *sami* in Georgian; *ake*, *öba*, *khpa* in Abkhaz; *zi*, *ṭu*, *shi* in Kabardan; *tsha*, *shi.*, *kkho* in Chechen; and *tso*, *ḳi*, *lab* in Avar. 'Horse' in these five languages is *tskheni*, *che*, *shi*, *govr* and *chu*, while 'water' is *tṣqali*, *azhe*, *psi*, *khi* and *lin*. The Caucasian languages form four groups: (1) north-western or Circassian, including Abkhaz, Adyge and Kabarda-Cherkes; (2) central, mainly Chechen and Ingush; (3) north-eastern or Daghestanian, consisting of three sub-groups: Avar and thirteen others; Lak and Dargo together; Lezgian, including Lezgi, Tabasaran, Rutul, Tsakhur, Agul and five others, some spoken by only about 1,000 people; and (4) southern (Kartvelian), with Georgian and two or three others.[15]

One fact which is often ignored is that the country known as 'Georgia' (*sakartvelo* – the land of the Kartlis) is not linguistically homogeneous. Not only are the Abkhazians of the north-west related linguistically and culturally to the Circassians of North Caucasus and not at all to the Georgians, but the western regions of present-day Georgia – Svaneti and Megrelia (sometimes in English 'Mingrelia'; in Georgian *samegrelo*) – have languages which, while related to Georgian (*kartuli*, in English 'Kartvelian'), are distinct from it and not mutually intelligible. Neither Svan nor Megrelian was written before the nineteenth century, and their aristocracy used Kartuli as their literary language.[16] The Osetians in northern Georgia and beyond the mountains in North Caucasus are Iranian-speakers – probably descended from the Alans who began to settle in the mountains about the first century AD.[17] Other speakers of Iranian languages are the Kurds, Mountain Jews, Taleshes and Tats.[18] The Caucasus also has many Turkic-speakers, descended from

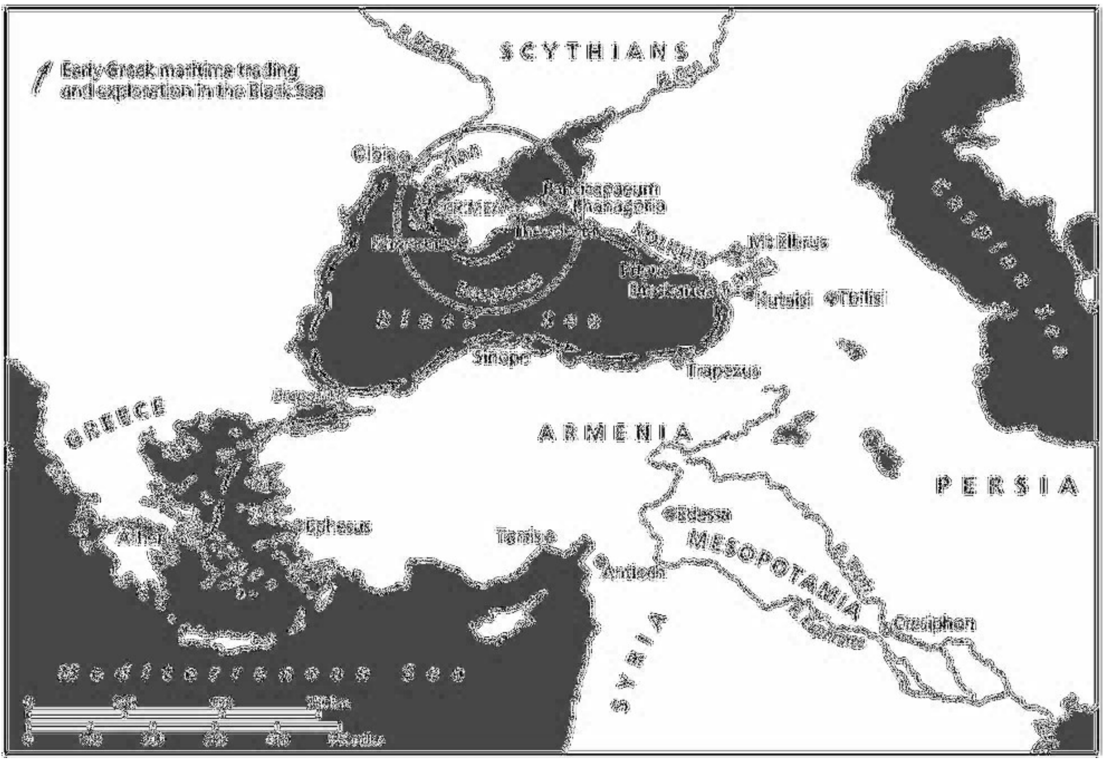
Central Asian nomadic tribes who settled at various periods, beginning with the Huns and Bulgars. Between the seventh and eleventh centuries AD north-eastern Caucasus was controlled by the Turkic Khazars who, along with the Kypchaks, contributed to the formation of the Kumuk and Balkar-Karachay peoples, and later the Caspian steppe was occupied by the Nogays. In the south, Turkmens migrated into the Caucasus, particularly from the eleventh century, when the Seljuqs overran Persia, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Anatolia, and eventually created the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire.[19]

One nation with its own territory and language (or languages) which disappeared leaving almost no trace in the course of history was Caucasian Albania,[20] which occupied the territory now called Azerbaijan, to the east of Georgia. What little is known about Albania comes from the Greek geographer Strabo, according to whom, in Albania 'one king rules all the tribes, but formerly the several tribes were ruled separately by kings of their own according to their several languages. They have twenty-six languages…[and] have no easy means of intercourse with one another.' In Armenia, on the other hand, throughout its various regions 'they all speak the same language'.[21]

Considering that it was in Mesopotamia and Persia that alphabetic writing was first devised about 4,000 BC,[22] it is not surprising that in the neighbouring Caucasus, where many different languages existed side by side, many different alphabets were invented for them. One of the most important early functions of lettering was to proclaim the achievements of kings, as in the incised stone monuments of ancient Persia,[23] and writing was used in royal chancelleries for keeping records in whichever was the current lingua franca – Babylonian, Persian or, later, Aramaic. In early Armenia they used Persian, Aramaic and Greek before the invention of the Armenian script,[24] and 'the…royal family and aristocracy were bilingual, speaking Greek or Iranian as well as Armenian'.[25]

Persians, Greeks and Romans

Persia's influence upon the Caucasus was not only cultural. Towards the north, Persia was exposed to the Great Eurasian steppes, stretching from Mongolia to Poland, where nomadic tribes of various ethnic origins roamed, and from time to time made incursions into lands with sedentary civilizations. For eastern Persians the main frontier requiring vigilance for nomad raids lay in Central Asia north of Khorasan and the river Oxus (Amu Darya). Another possible approach was around the northern end of the Caspian Sea and southward from the Volga along the Daghestan coast, beyond which lay the inviting Aran and Mughan plains. These played an important part in Persia's frontier defence from early times, and from at least the eighth century BC the Persians guarded this route with a castle where the pass narrows near the southern end of the Caucasus range (see Map 3). This barrier came to be known as the Caspian Gate, the Albanian Gate, the Iron Gate, etc., but its official name in Persian was Darband, meaning 'gateway', 'canyon' or 'dead-end'.[26] Here Darband stood as the the Persian Empire's extreme outpost in the west, and in the fifth to sixth centuries AD its defences were improved with elaborate fortifications by Shahs Kobad and Khosrou (Chosroes) I Anushirvan.


Early Greek maritime trading and exploration in the Black Sea
SCYTHIANS
Olbia
CRIMEA
Panticapaeum
Phanagoria
Theodosia
Chersonesus
Mt Elbrus
Kutaisi
Tbilisi
Black Sea
Sinope
Trapezus
Caspian Sea
GREECE
Byzantium
ARMENIA
PERSIA
Athens
Ephesus
Tarsus
Antioch
Edessa
MESOPOTAMIA
Ctesiphon
SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea

Map 3 Early Greek maritime trading and exploration in the Black Sea.

One European people intimately connected with the Caucasus from about the ninth century BC were the Greeks, whose exploration and colonization around the Black Sea ‘as far as Colchis and the limits of Jason's expedition’ provided the earliest information about the region.[27] Greek colonies in Asia Minor included Cappadocian Pontus, with Sinope and Trapezus (Trebizond) on the Black Sea coast, and the Cimmerian Bosporus along the northern coast from the Danube delta to the Strait of Kerch – including the Dnepr (Borysthenes) with the town of Olbia; the Tauric Chersonesus (Crimea) with Theodosia, Ponticapaeum and other towns; the Sea of Azov (Lake Maeotis) and lower Don (Tanais), and neighbouring parts of the North Caucasus coast towards Colchis.[28] In all these areas archeological excavations have revealed the continuity of these outposts of Graeco-Roman civilization over a thousand years.[29] However, in the sixth century BC Asia Minor came under threat from the expanding Persian Empire as first King Cyrus II, then Darius advanced westward, establishing a base in Ionia and crossing the Hellespont to occupy Thrace, on the doorstep of Macedonia. Alexander the Great's counter-expedition in the fourth century BC thrust eastward through Asia Minor and Mesopotamia to Persia and India, and his successors created the Empire of Seleucus, which for more than a century stretched 1,500 miles into Central Asia and included Armenia, Georgia and Atropatene Media. The latter (today's Iranian Azerbaijan) was named after Atropates, the satrap of the province appointed in 328 BC after Alexander's death.[30] From the second century BC it was the turn of the Romans to send military expeditions eastwards, initially to conquer Macedonia and Greece.

By then the Persians had reacted against this aggression from Europe by restoring a unified Iranian state, beginning south of the Caspian Sea in Parthia, where in 123–88 BC Mehrdad II (‘Mithridates’ in Greek) ‘transformed Parthia from a petty kingdom into a powerful empire’. Roman ambition and desire for eastern trade and booty challenged this in 64 BC, when Pompey led his army through Asia Minor, and in reorganizing Rome's new eastern provinces occupied Caucasian Albania and Armenia, whose King Tigran he confirmed in power. The next Roman general to emulate Alexander the Great by taking an army east to conquer the Parthians and strike out towards India was Marcus Crassus in 60 BC. King Artavazd II of Armenia was committed to an alliance with Crassus, but the latter spurned his advice to avoid the route through Mesopotamia, and in 53 BC Crassus suffered a catastrophic defeat by the Parthians at Carrhae in northern Syria. During the turbulent period in Rome following the murder of Julius Caesar (who had also been planning a revanche against the Parthians), amid much manoeuvring for power between ambitious patricians, Mark Antony became responsible for the East. In 36 BC, undaunted by Crassus's débacle, Antony set out from his new base in Queen Cleopatra's Egypt with another huge Roman force. From Syria he subdued Armenia, but was halted by the Parthians and Medes and forced by winter snows to retreat. Antony's expedition was terminated, however, not by war but by his rival, Octavian (later Emperor Augustus) who acknowledged the stature of the Parthian King Farhad IV (Greek 'Phraates'), and signed a treaty establishing a Parthian–Roman frontier on the Euphrates. Thereafter, in AD 58, Nero too mounted a Caucasus campaign, sending General Corbulo with a new army specially trained to face the Parthians, to occupy Armenia and reassert Roman authority. This expedition provoked a ten-year war, but was successful in defeating King Trdat I, the Parthian puppet king, who was allowed to retain his Armenian throne on condition that he travelled to Rome for coronation, thus acknowledging Roman suzerainty.[31]

Before Antony's expedition King Artavazd of Armenia had gone over to the Parthians, but he soon acknowledged his allegiance to Rome and brought his Armenian troops to join Antony, until the latter became bogged down in Atropatene and was forced to retreat before the advancing Parthians. Although Artavazd covered the Romans' retreat, Antony made him the scapegoat for the failure of the expedition, and took vengeance by occupying Armenia. He put the king and his family in chains and in 34 BC took them to Cleopatra in Egypt, where Artavazd was eventually beheaded. A year later Antony's Egyptian dream collapsed, and he and his queen committed suicide in 31 BC.

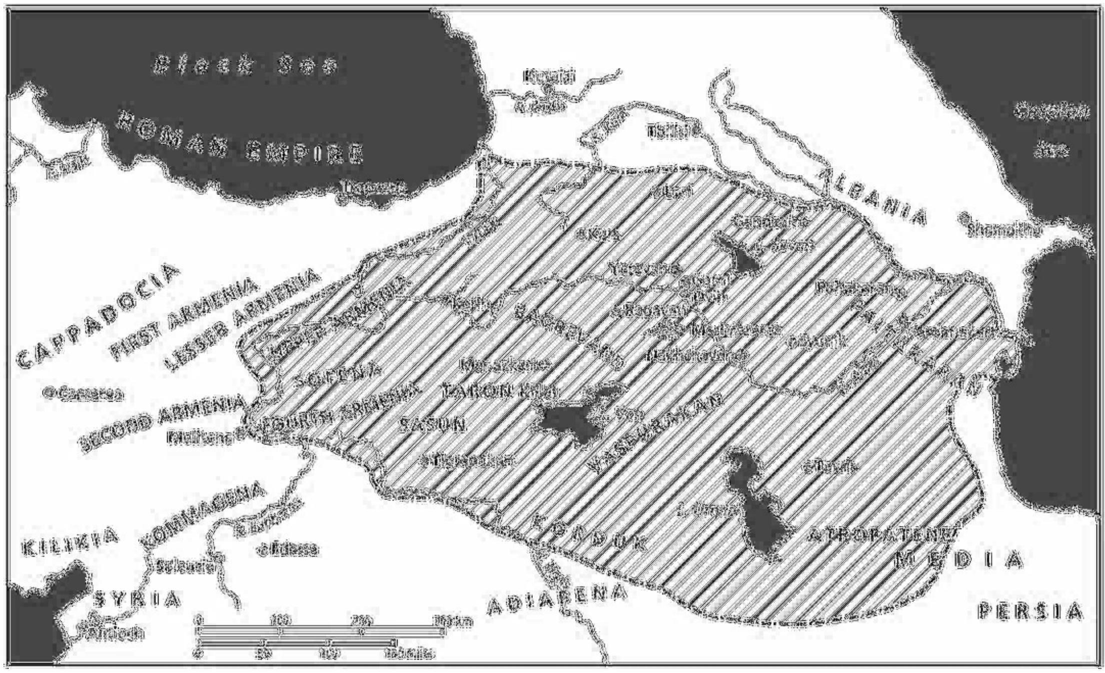
The Romans retained their grip on Palestine and Egypt for another 600 years, but despite occasional disagreements over Armenia they did not mount another large expedition against Parthia until the second century AD, when Emperor Trajan (born in AD 53, ruled 98–117) became ambitious to emulate Alexander the Great by extending the Roman Empire in the east. Postponing his Asian campaign until he subjugated Dacia, the mountainous land north of the lower Danube (now Romania), he took his legions to the Caucasus in AD 114, conquered Armenia, and occupied Assyria and Mesopotamia, including Ctesiphon, the huge Parthian capital founded c. 110 BC. He then sailed down the Tigris to the port where Alexander had embarked for India, but was obliged by uprisings in the newly conquered territories to turn back to Cilicia, where he died in 117.[32] Even the philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius in AD 163 sent an expedition to reassert Roman power in Armenia, which had been seized by the Parthian King Valaksh IV; it was now declared to be a province of Rome. Marcus defeated a formidable Parthian army at Dura Europus and once again sacked Ctesiphon and, although an outbreak of plague put an end to the war, thereafter Rome controlled key positions in Mesopotamia which it held until the rise of Persia's Sasanian dynasty in the third century.[33] At about this time, too, the Romans also invaded the eastern Black Sea coast, where Abazgia (Abkhazia) traded with the Graeco-Roman Bosporan colonies, and in the fourth century this principality on the doorstep of Georgia became subjected for the next 300 years to governors appointed by Constantinople.[34]

Armenians and Georgians

Except for the Persians, the Armenians have the longest historical records of any people in the Caucasus, with a continuous series of royal dynasties known after their founders as the Orontids, Artaxiads, Arsacids and, from the fourth century AD, the Bagratids. These are chronicled by Armenian historians, whose works – though often incomplete, confused and 'afflicted, in the service of national religion, with a tendency to overlook some facts of history and to alter others'[35] – cover many centuries from 401 BC to AD 1071. The ancestors of the Armenians inhabited the plateau north of Mesopotamia and shared in the cultural development of its ancient civilizations of Assyria and Babylon.[36] In the high valleys around Lakes Van, Sevan and Urmia the earliest state to be formed, during the ninth to seventh centuries BC, was Urartu, but the assumption that Urartu was Armenian[37] is now generally rejected. Recent scholarship acknowledges the unique importance of Urartu in the era when practically all Near Eastern countries, including ancient Israel and Phoenicia, were subjugated by Assyria: 'The only power in the region which successfully resisted Assyrian expansion and remained a wealthy and sophisticated rival was the highland kingdom of Urartu… [which] maintained a flourishing self-sufficiency boosted by the exploitation of local raw materials such as iron, and was famous for its fine horses.'[38] An Armenian patriot writes that 'The documented history of Urartu begins in 1275 BC. At the time of the destruction of Assyria Urartu's successors, the Armenians (who are to the Urartians as the English are to the Britons or the French to the Gauls) occupied Urartu as a ruling aristocracy.'[39] On linguistic and archeological grounds it is widely accepted that the Armenians (speaking an Indo-European language distinct from those of the Hittites and Phrygians of Asia Minor) 'penetrated into the former Urartian territory…probably in the 7th and 6th centuries BC' (see Map 4).[40] An Armenian historian's opinion is that:

> The Armenian people was formed about the late second or early first millennium BC on the Armenian uplands, as a result of the gradual fusion of long-established tribes…and more recent arrivals…Of special significance was the contribution of the Hurrian–Urartian tribes, the most numerous and widely dispersed ethnic element in the uplands, who…constituted the physical basis of the emerging nation. These included the autochthonous population of the Lake Van basin – the Urartian tribes – as well as the closely related Hurrians of the Aratsani and upper Tigris valleys and the upper reaches of the Araxes and Kura…Another important element were the Hetto-Luvian tribes inhabiting…the lands of the upper Euphrates valley…[including] the tribal confederation of Hayas from which the Armenian people inherited…their own name for themselves – 'Hay' [rhyming with 'tie']. Of equal importance…in the formation of the Armenian people were Indo-European Armen tribes, who contributed their second name, 'Armenians'.[41]

By the first century BC Armenia under King Tigran I the Great (95–56 BC) may have extended from the place where the Euphrates emerges from the mountains north of Syria in the west to the confluence of the Kura and Araxes in the east, including the regions of Artsakh (Karabagh) and Syunik (Nakhchavan).[42] The writing of their history by Armenians began in the fifth century AD with Movses Khorenatsi, and by the thirteenth century Armenia and Albania had produced eighteen historians, including Agatangełos, Favstos Byuzandatsi (Faust the Byzantine), Ovannes Draskhanakertsi, Stepanos Taronatsi, and the historian of Caucasian Albania, Movses Daskhurantsi (also known as Kałankatuatsi), and several philosophers including Mkhitar Gosh and Smbat Gundstabl.[43]


Black Sea
ROMAN EMPIRE
Kutaisi
Tbilisi
Caspian Sea
ALBANIA
Shamakhi
CAPPADOCIA
FIRST ARMENIA
LESSER ARMENIA
Caesarea
SECOND ARMENIA
Melitene
FOURTH ARMENIA
TARON
SASUN
Yerevan
VASPURAKAN
Van
Tabriz
L. Urmia
KORDUK
ATROPATENE
MEDIA
PERSIA
KILIKIA
KOMMAGENA
Edessa
Seleucia
SYRIA
Antioch
ADIABENA
0
100
200
300 km
0
50
100
150 miles

Map 4 The borders of Great Armenia, c. 60 BC.

No general term for what is now called ‘Georgia’ was in use before AD 1008, but the names of many principalities occur, including Lazica (or Egrisi) on the Black Sea coast in the west; Kartli, known to the Greeks as Iberia, in the centre; and Kakheti in the east (often medieval Georgia as a whole is referred to as Iberia). Georgian history-writing began in the twelfth century AD with the chronicles known as *The Life of Kartli* (*kartlis tskhovreba*).[44] Reports about Armenia and Georgia from much earlier times have been gleaned from the historians of ancient Greece and Rome – Herodotus, Xenophon, Plutarch and others. On the basis of the relatively sparse facts in these early sources scholars constructed the first accounts of early Armenian and Georgian history.[45] An important archeological site in western Georgia which has only recently become incorporated into the historical record are the burials at Vani, south-west of Kutaisi. Gold artefacts had been found there since the 1870s, but it was only in the 1930s that systematic exploration began, and Vani yielded evidence of a flourishing Georgian culture dating back to the sixth century BC, which left no written records. While some graves included 'Scythian'-like burials of rulers, their servants and their horses, others were comparable in the sophistication of their bronze sculpture and gold ornaments to those of Greek Asia Minor.[46]

The cultures and politics of early Georgia and Armenia were closely interwoven. Throughout their early history they both came under the sway of Persia – for more than 2,000 years the most powerful and cultured state in western Asia – and their first royal dynasties claimed kinship with the Iranian monarchy.[47] Although the early Persian dynasties propagated Zoroastrianism, this left few traces in Caucasia,[48] whereas Animist religion, venerating nature spirits, trees and mountains, with its blood sacrifice, magical rites and ancestor cult, persisted, leaving many relics to the present day.[49] Another Persian legacy in Armenia and Georgia is linguistic: both their languages contain large numbers of words derived from Persian, numbering several hundred in Georgian.[50] Armenia and Georgia were also exposed to repeated campaigning by Roman armies attacking Parthia, and from about AD 117 Armenia was annexed to the Roman Empire. Persia under the Sasanian kings thereafter reconquered Georgia, while Armenia was partitioned between Persia and Rome in 384, so that for 600 years Rome's eastern border and cultural influence lay close to, and sometimes enfolded, Tbilisi, and Iberia, like Armenia, was alternately subject to Roman power or in rebellion against it.[51]

Georgia was not conquered by the Romans, but its rulers did have direct contacts with Rome. In the second century AD the Black Sea coast of Colchis was occupied by them, and when Emperor Hadrian (117–138) was touring the Black Sea colonies in 129 he invited the Iberian king Farsman (or Parsman; in Greek ‘Pharasmanes’) to come and pay homage, but he refused. However, Farsman did respond to an invitation from Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius (138–161) to make a state visit to Rome, and – apparently having a suite of knights with him – delighted the emperor with a display of horsemanship and ‘was very well received’.[52]

Contact with the eastern regions of the Roman Empire brought the Caucasian kingdoms into the sphere of the Christian Church during the earliest stages of its formation and spreading from Palestine through Syria and Asia Minor. After harsh persecution in the third and early fourth centuries, the Romans came round to toleration of Christianity, and this was reinforced by Emperor Constantine I (born c. 285, converted to Christianity at the age of 26, and baptized on his deathbed in 337) whose reign culminated in the creation in 330 of the new eastern capital at Byzantium, named ‘Constantinople’ – an explicitly Christian metropolis to repudiate Roman polytheism. Sixty years later Christianity was declared Rome's state religion by Theodosius I, and on his death in 395 the realm was divided, with Constantinople as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, and Rome that of the Western Empire, which survived until AD 476. During the first centuries of Christianity's expansion, missionaries from Syria and Constantinople reached Armenia, Georgia, Albania and Abazgia. King Trdat III (298–330) of Armenia, complying with the anti-Christian policy of one of Emperor Diocletian's successors, Maximinus, persecuted Christians in Armenia until 311. According to tradition, Armenians were first converted to Christianity in AD 301, and in 314/15 (after Constantine's Milan Edict of toleration) Trdat banned paganism and declared Christianity Armenia's state religion. Christianity, first preached in Georgia by a woman, St Nino, was adopted as the state religion by King Mirian III around AD 334, under the authority of the patriarch of Antioch, and by the fifth century the patriarch in Mtskheta presided over about twenty bishoprics.[53] Georgia became a patriarchate of the Diphysite Eastern Orthodox Church, but the Armenian Apostolic Church – called Gregorian after its founder St Gregory the Illuminator – remained separate in its adherence to Monophysitism. This was the doctrine that Jesus did not embody both divine and human natures, but only the divine: a view dismissed as heresy by an ecumenical council in Chalcedon in 451. In 482 Emperor Zeno revised Constantinople's position to ‘moderate Monophysitism’, thus establishing religious unity in the empire, including Georgia and Armenia, following the synod held at Dvin in 506. However, this compromise was later abandoned, as the Byzantine Empire declared for Orthodoxy (‘true doctrine’!) based on Chalcedonian dogma. At the Second Dvin Synod the Armenian Church officially adopted Monophysitism, while the Georgians came round to Orthodoxy, with which the Armenians finally broke at a third synod in 609.[54] These theological disagreements, with their mutual accusations of heresy, prejudice relations between Georgians and Armenians to the present day.

Christianity was also established among the Albanians, but the account of this presented by their earliest historian is very confused. Although the first official introduction was attributed to the Armenian king Trdat III in c. 314 after he ceased persecuting those of his subjects who had responded to unofficial apostles from Syria and Cappadocia, it is also said that the Albanians were converted by King Urnayr of

Albania, who lived in the first century, and then by King Vačē in the fifth century, but despite all these, the Albanians, along with the Armenians and Georgians, are said to have been reconfirmed as Christians by St Mesrop Mashtots (361–440).[55]

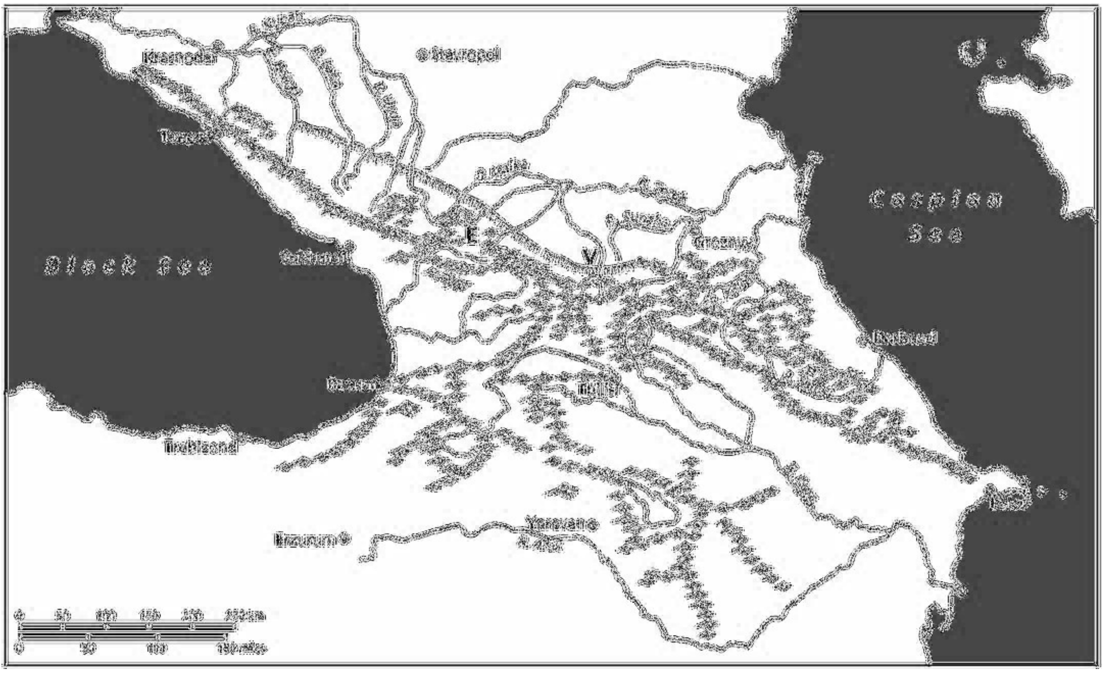
A milestone in the early Christian period was the invention of the Armenian alphabet by the scholar Mesrop Mashtots in the fifth century, when the translation of the Bible into Armenian began. As a result, the Armenians have the oldest and richest medieval literature in the Caucasus, with more than 25,000 surviving manuscripts. The entirely different Georgian (and Albanian) alphabets have also been attributed to Mesrop, but Georgians refute this.[56] About the same time the characteristic Caucasian style of church architecture appeared, culminating in such great churches as Echmiadzin, Ripsime and Zvartnots in Armenia, and Dzveli Suamta, Bolnisi Sioni and Jvari in Georgia.[57]

Despite rebellions by the rulers of Armenia and Georgia and their rejection of Zoroastrianism and adoption of Christianity, Persia's shahs continued to have considerable influence over them, so that, for instance, in the sixth century ‘the Iberian princes, exactly like their Armenian confrères, transferred their allegiance to the Great King [i.e. the *Shahinshah* of Persia]’, and after the death of King Bakur in 580 AD Persia entirely abolished the Iberian monarchy with the approval of Iberia's princes. It appears that at this time Armenia, although embracing considerable territory, was no longer a single state. Under the Arsacid dynasty (AD 53–428) and subsequently, kings of Armenia presided over the whole, but their realm consisted of a large number of autonomous states and many local dynasties.[58] Indeed it is said that ‘Armenia's whole territory has almost never…been one complete state under a single ruler.'[59] Nevertheless, Armenia's cultural importance throughout the Caucasus was enormous – until the assertion of Turkish nationalism in the twentieth century, and feeble Western diplomacy, led to the near-disappearance of Armenia as an independent country, almost without serious protest from the 'great powers', after the First World War.[60]

The most famous, almost legendary, early king of Georgia was known as Vakhtang 'Gorgasali' (447–522).[61] After allying himself with the shah against the Romans for almost thirty years, Vakhtang turned against the Mazdaists and joined the Byzantines and Armenians in fighting against Persia until his death in western Georgia. He is also revered by Georgian Christians for gaining the separation of their church from the Patriarchate of Antioch as an autocephalous body – although Orthodox Church doctrine and politics would still be subject to instability for many years to come.[62]

Armenia and Georgia have frequently invited comparison. Armenia, generally the more expansive nation, attained its largest geographical extent under King Tigran I, with a commanding situation on the plateau above Mesopotamia – the 'land between the rivers' Euphrates and Tigris, whose sources lay in Armenia. Its neighbours were the civilizations of Assyria and Babylon, and the equally ancient Persian Empire to the east. The Urartu people, who occupied the mountainous territory which became Armenia, were renowned for their engineering works and architecture, and it was after the destruction of their civilization in the seventh century BC by the Cimmerians from Asia Minor that the Indo-European-speaking Armenian people was formed.[63] Thereafter Armenia expanded greatly and created its own cultural sites, in continuous contact not only with its

Mesopotamian neighbours, but also with the Greeks and Romans. Georgia was more withdrawn: a mountain refuge from the changing and often belligerent peoples of the south, and marginal to the events occurring in Assyria and Babylon. Here, among the towering mountains and deep gorges of the Caucasus, the Kartvelian peoples had a stable home, relatively isolated except for their neighbours the Armenians to the south, but risking wary contacts with strangers westward across the Colchis plain to the Black Sea and the Abkhazians, eastward down the Mtkvari/Kura valley to the Albanians of the Caspian plain or, more strenuously, northward across the mountain passes to the Circassian inhabitants of North Caucasus (see Map 5).[64]


Krasnodar
Stavropol
Tuapse
Black Sea
Sukhumi
E
V
Grozny
Caspian Sea
Derbent
Batumi
Tbilisi
Trebizond
Baku
Yerevan
Erzurum
0 50 100 150 200 250 km
0 50 100 150 miles

Map 5 The Caucasus: mountains and rivers
The schematic map shows the main ('watershed') range and its transverse ridges, forming numerous valleys and narrow gorges, which offered the population refuges from invaders. Along 350 miles the main Caucasus range, which separates Georgia from North Caucasus, has more than sixty mountains with altitudes over 10,000 feet, including the 30-mile cluster of Tetnuldi (15,934 feet), Jangitau (16,590), Shkhara (16,623), Tikhtenden (16,869) and Dykhtau (17,069). To the north-west stands the highest peak in the Caucasus, Elbrus (18,506 feet: marked E on the map). To the north a parallel range of limestone mountains presents a front of vertical precipices. East of Vladikavkaz (marked V) and the Russian military highway to Georgia, the mountains run mainly south-east through Ingushia-Chechenia and Daghestan. Here too there are about twenty-five peaks over 10,000 feet.

No doubt the Armenians and Georgians developed in early times those general features which became characteristic of them as nations. The land where the Armenians established themselves near Lake Van is located where the Alpine–Himalayan mountain chain swings southward from Anatolia into Iran and becomes the Zagros range. As a territory for human settlement this node was a vast jumble of ranges of folded or volcanic rock enclosing high valleys. It was fertile enough to support pastures and agriculture, but cultivation was never easy in Armenia, even in the twentieth century:

> In the mountains every patch of land which is at all suitable for agriculture is utilized laboriously, whether it is a clearing in the woods, a patch of grass among crags or rubble, any scrap of stone-free earth, however high, on a steep slope or jutting out above a chasm, or narrow drifts of soil in gullies. Three major areas of cultivation stand out against this variegated background: the Ararat plain, the Shirak plateau, and the high-altitude basin of Lake Sevan.[65]

Lying mostly at between 4,500 and 5,500 feet, 'almost everywhere, Armenia is higher than the countries which immediately surround it…like some massive rock-bound island rising out of the surrounding lowlands, steppes and plains'.[66] Only in the eastern provinces did the Armenians enjoy the less laborious conditions of true lowlands. Here the lie of the land was different, in the wedge of alluvial plain around the confluence and combined lower reaches of the rivers Araxes and Kura, which stretches back up country from the Caspian shore in a wide swathe of valley and low hills leading inland for some 280 miles, almost as far as Tbilisi. Beyond here, there are mountains on all sides, with rugged gorges leading – some for 100 km or more – to dead ends against the barrier of the Great Caucasus range, or in some cases to difficult passes over to the northern side. Even on the single road up through Tbilisi to the point at Surami where the Kura emerges from the south-western mountains of the 'Lesser Caucasus' (whose highest peak reaches 3,301 metres) travellers found their way to Kutaisi barred by the Likhi range, through which only one narrow pass led to the Colchis lowlands and the Black Sea.

North and East Caucasia, Albania

The division of the Caucasus in the Roman manner, into Ciscaucasia 'on this side of the Caucasus range' (north) and Transcaucasia 'on the other side' (south), reflected only Russian imperial conceptions, and is inappropriate from any other viewpoint.[67] It was also oversimple, because of the existence on the eastern side of a good route along the Caspian coast and others through the mountains, whereas the western, Black Sea, coast was difficult. A west/east division better reflects the historical situation at most periods.

Among the tribes who passed through the great Eurasian steppes on their migrations to the west – Cimmerians, Scythians, Sarmatians and others[68] – were the Alans, who first appeared in the North Caucasus in the second century BC and lingered there for several centuries, making a contribution to the formation of the Osetians and neighbouring peoples. The Alans were overshadowed in the late fourth century AD by the great migration of the Turkic-speaking Huns from the east, some of whom settled in the North Caucasus steppe. Bishop Grigoris of Darband – by then the most important seat of Christianity in north-east Caucasia – did not succeed in converting the Huns, but later missionaries from Chogha (the Albanian church capital in the

Samur delta) did take Christianity north into Daghestan, where their priest Kardos is said to have preached among the Huns for fourteen years. In North Caucasus, too, missionaries from Constantinople or Georgia converted some peoples, including the Alans and the Abkhazians, the latter eventually having two archbishoprics – Pitiunt (now Pitsunda) and Anakopia. In Caucasian Albania and southern Daghestan, however, it was Armenian missionaries who introduced Christianity among the local population.[69]

Meanwhile the Alans survived until the fall of the Hunnic empire in 454, when they re-emerged on the Caspian steppe between the Volga–Don portage and Darband. From the late sixth century, however, this territory came under the sway of another Turkic people, the Khazars, who established themselves around the Volga delta and north Caspian, and whose khanate had by 650 imposed a régime of tribute-exaction from merchant caravans moving between Central Asia and Europe, and over the peoples of Daghestan, North Caucasus, the middle Volga, the Don, Crimea and the lower Dnepr, including the Alans, Volga Bulgars, Magyars and East Slavs.[70] In eastern Caucasia the southern boundary of the Khazar state lay on the Caspian shore where the mountains came closest to the sea.

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[1] For a discussion of the terms 'Middle East' and 'Near East' see G. M. Wickens, 'Introduction to the Middle East', in R. M. Savory, ed., *Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 1–2.

[2] W. E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People, from the Beginning down to the Russian Conquest in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1932, pp. 12, 18, 56–7, 59; *Past Worlds:*

The Times Atlas of Archaeology, edited by C. Scarre, *et al.*, London, 1988, pp. 80–1, 110–11, 114–17, 120–2.

[3] R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, revised edn, 2 vols., Harmondsworth, 1960, vol. I, pp. 112, 143–5, 148–9, 193, 226–7, 318; vol. II, pp. 114, 148–9, 216, 219, 221–3, 229, 232–5, 237–8. For a graphic overview of early Caucasian and Near Eastern history, see C. McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Ancient History*, Harmondsworth, 1967.

[4] Baedeker, *Russia*, pp. 457–8; H. Longhurst, *Adventures in Oil: The Story of British Petroleum*, London, 1959, pp. 81–3, 85, 90–1, 103; S. V. Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz: geograficheskoye opisaniye v 22-kh tomakh. Azerbaydzhan*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 10, 44, 103.

[5] Chechenia in North Caucasus also has significant oil resources, which, disastrously for the Chechen people, activated the covetous spirit of the Russian state and brought the current war into their homeland. On the western side of North Caucasus too there is an oilfield in Krasnodar province in Circassia.

[6] M. Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 17 vols., London, 1987, vol. XV, pp. 579, 586–8; S. Razmjou, 'Religion and burial customs', in J. E. Curtis and N. Tallis, eds., *Forgotten Empire: the World of Ancient Persia* [Catalogue of an Exhibition at the British Museum], London, 2005, pp. 150–80, 228–9.

[7] Garsoïan, 'Iran and Caucasia', in Suny, ed., Transcaucasia, p. 11. For superb illustrations of fire-temples and ancient Persian art in general, see R. Ghirshman, *Persia: from the*

Origins to Alexander the Great, London, 1964, pp. 134, 199, 206, 227–9.

[8] Baedeker, *Russia*, p. 443; Garsoïan, ‘Iran and Caucasia’; K. Gink and I. Turánszky, *Azerbaijan: Mosques, Turrets, Palaces*, Budapest, 1979, pp. 59–60, plates 94–7; C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington, DC, 1963, pp. 88–9.

[9] F. Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, 2nd edn, Harmondsworth, 1979, pp. 105–6, maps pp. 345–7.

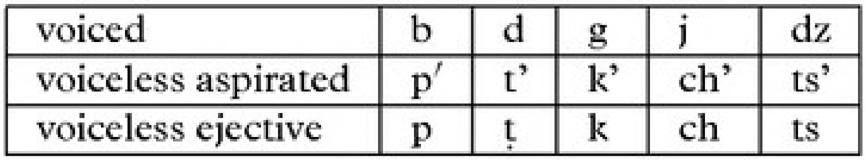
[10] S. V. Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz: geograficheskoye opisaniye v 22-kh tomakh. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok: Povolzhye; Severnyy Kavkaz*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 707–10.

[11] M. G. Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo naroda s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dney*, Yerevan, 1980, p. 7.

[12] S. Akiner, *Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union*, London, 1983, pp. 243–5.

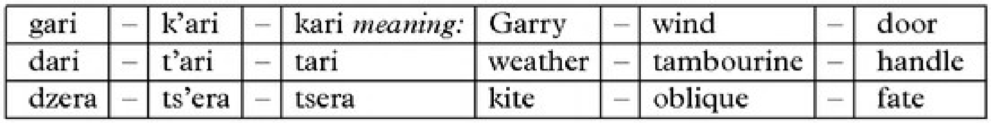
[13] M. Adzhiyev, ‘I snova “kumyk o kumykakh”’, *Otechestvo: krayevedcheskiy almanakh*, 1991, no. 2, pp. 88, 90.

[14] In Georgian there are three grades of consonants:



voiced	b	d	g	j	dz
voiceless aspirated	p′	t’	k’	ch’	ts’
voiceless ejective	p	ṭ	k	ch	ts

This produces such trios of distinct Georgian words as:



gari	–	k'ari	–	kari *meaning:*	Garry	–	wind	–	door
dari	–	t'ari	–	tari	weather	–	tambourine	–	handle
dzera	–	ts'era	–	tsera	kite	–	oblique	–	fate

In English the voiceless plosives p, t, k are generally pronounced with aspiration, so they will not be specially marked here, viz. *kari*, not *k'ari*; but as the ejective consonants have no parallel in English they are marked in this book by a dot below the letter or combination of letters: *ṭari*, *ṭsera*, etc. See A. I. Aronson, *Georgian: a Reading Grammar*, Columbus, 1982, p. 16, paras. 1.1, 1.3; B. G. Hewitt, *Georgian: a Learner's Grammar*, London, 1996, p. 5 (where, however, the apostrophe is used to indicate not an aspirated, but a glottalized consonant).

[15] Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 196–230; R. Wixman, *Language Aspects of Ethnic Patterns in the North Caucasus* (University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper no.191), Chicago, 1980, pp. 81–95; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, edited by V. V. Vinogradov, *et al.*, 5 vols., Moscow, 1966–8, vol. IV, *Iberiysko-kavkazskiye yazyki*, pp. 5–22, 95–100, 184–9, 247–54, 272–5, 400–3, 488–9, 508–9, 524–7.

[16] B. G. Hewitt, 'Abkhazia: a problem of identity and ownership', *Central Asian Survey*, 1993, 12, 3, pp. 268, 271–2; Hewitt, 'Yet a third consideration of *Völker, Sprachen und Kulturen des südlichen Kaukasus*', *Central Asian Survey*, 1995, 14, 2, pp. 287–8, 303–6.

[17] R. A. Gabrielyan, *Armyano-alanskiye otnosheniya (I–X vv.)*, Yerevan, 1989, pp. 64–88; McEvedy, *Penguin Atlas of Ancient History*, pp. 68–89; McEvedy, *Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, Harmondsworth, 1961, pp. 14–89.

[18] The Indo-European languages spoken in the Caucasus show their relation to other members of the family, including English, in some obviously similar words, e.g. 'thou' which varies from *to* to *du*; 'daughter' – *dustr* to *dukhtär*; 'mother' – *mair* to *moa*; but there are many differences. For instance, 'one, two, three, four' (related to e.g. Latin *unus*, *duo*, *tres*, *quattuor*) in Kurdish (Iranian) are *yäk*, *dö*, *se*, *char*, whereas in Osetian they are *iu*, *deuua*, *arta*, *tseppar*, and in Armenian *mek*, *yerku*, *yerek*, *chors*. See Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 158, 161–2, 164, 179–83; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. I, *Indoyevropeyskiye yazyki*, pp. 237–80, 562–98.

[19] *Narody Kavkaza*, edited by S. P. Tolstov, *et al.*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1960–2, vol. II, pp. 44–5; *Narody Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana*, edited by S. P. Tolstov, *et al.*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1962–3, vol. II, pp. 10–11. Turkic languages everywhere share very similar grammatical structures and vocabulary, so that in Azerbaijanian, Kumuk, Nogai and Karachai-Balkar, as in Turkish, the numerals 'one' to 'four' are *bir*, *iki*, *üch*, *dört* (with minor variations); in all of them 'thou' is *sen*, 'horse' is *at*; 'water' and 'mountain' are *su*, *dagh* in Azerbaijanian and Turkish, but *suw*, *tau* in the others: Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 42–4, 46–50, 51; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. II, *Tyurkskiye yazyki*, pp. 66–90, 194–33, 280–300.

[20] There is no historic connection between Caucasian Albania and the European country of (Illyrian) Albania lying north-west of Greece.

[21] Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, with an English translation by H. L. Jones, in 8 vols., London, 1917–32, vol. V, pp. 208–11, 229, 323–5.

[22] C. Burney and D. M. Lang, *The Peoples of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and Caucasus*, London, 1971, pp. 264–7; G. Jean, *Writing: the Story of Alphabets and Scripts*, London, 1992, pp. 11–63; McEvedy, *Penguin Atlas of Ancient History*, pp. 26–7, 36–7, 44–5, 56–7.

[23] See illustrations in Curtis and Tallis, *Forgotten Empire*, pp. 12–15, 18–29, 56–9, 75, 81, 193, 196–9, 258, 262. An English translation of King Darius's inscriptions at Behistun, recording all the lands he conquered ‘by the will of Ahuramazda’ is given in R. N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran*, Munich, 1984, pp. 90–1, 96, 363–8.

[24] R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, London, 1962, pp. 103–4, 146–9, illus. 37–9; Frye, *History of Ancient Iran*, p. 164.

[25] D. M. Lang, *Armenia: Cradle of Civilization*, London, 1970, pp. 113, 126.

[26] A. A. Kudryavtsev, *Drevniy Derbent*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 14–31; *Persidsko-russkiy slovar/ farhang fārsī berūs*, vol. I, p. 617.

[27] Apollonius of Rhodes, *The Voyage of the Argo: the Argonautica*, translated with an introduction by E. V. Rieu, Harmondsworth, 1959.

[28] Strabo, *Geography*, vol. I, pp. 167–9, 275–6, 283, 411–13; vol. II, pp. 481–3, 495, 515; vol. III, pp. 189, 213, 221, 225, 231–9, 241–7, 283; vol. V, pp. 191–217, 291, 371, 387–91.

[29] *Arkheologiya SSSR. Antichnye gosudarstva Severnogo Prichernomorya*, edited by V. S. Dolgorukov, G. A. Kosholenko and I. T. Kruglikova, Moscow, 1984, pp. 5, 9, 47, 59, 73–5, 106–13, 122–3, 177–81, etc.

[30] K. Farrokh, *Shadows in the Desert: Ancient Persia at War*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 114–17; Frye, History of Ancient Iran, p. 143.

[31] Farrokh, *Shadows in the Desert*, pp. 145–51; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 50–8.

[32] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 204–5; S. Capo and I. F. Stellingwerff, *Trajan's Column*, Terni, 2000, [pp. 34–7, 43–8]; Farrokh, *Shadows in the Desert*, pp. 124–5, 129–31, 144–51.

[33] Farrokh, *Shadows in the Desert*, pp. 164–7, 178–86.

[34] Z. V. Anchabadze, *Iz istorii srednevekovoy Abkhazii (VI–XVII vv.)*, Sukhumi, 1959, p. 80; N. A. Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, eds., *Istoriya Gruzii: uchebnoye posobiye, vol. I, S drevneyshikh vremyon do 60-kh godov XIX veka*, Tbilisi, 1962, pp. 103, 106–7; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, edited by M. D. Lordkipanidze and D. L. Muskhelishvili, 8 vols., Tbilisi, 1988, vol. II, *Gruziya v IV–X vekakh*, pp. 112–13, 117–19, 122, 183–4, 250, 280–2. Abkhazia became a bone of political contention in Georgian historiography in the twentieth

century, with much nationalist propaganda about the ethnic origins (Abkhazian or Georgian) of rulers of the Abkhazian Kingdom; in 1992 this became the pretext for war between Georgia and Abkhazia.

[35] Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 15–19, 277, 293–7, 306, 338–42; see also Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 177–205; R. G. Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, London, 1989, pp. 5–19.

[36] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 177–205; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 10, 13–40; Suny, *Making*, pp. 5–19.

[37] See, for instance, the heading 'The rich heritage of [our] ancestors, the Urarts', in V. Harutyunyan [Russian transliteration 'Arutyunyan'], *Kamennaya letopis armyanskogo naroda*, Yerevan, 1985, p. 10 and n. 47.

[38] *Past Worlds*, p. 156.

[39] M. Chachin, *The Kingdom of Armenia*, London, 1987, p. 1.

[40] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edn, *Micropaedia*, vol. XII, pp. 197–8; *Macropaedia*, vol. XXII, pp. 589–90, 665–6.

[41] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 27.

[42] Lang, Armenia, pp. 23, 130–3; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 42, map opposite p. 112.

[43] V. Ya. Bryusov, *Letopis istoricheskikh sudeb armyanskogo naroda* [reprint of 1940 edn], Yerevan, 1989, p. 74; Gabrielyan, *Armyano-alanskiye otnosheniya*, pp. 10–26; A. S. Garibyan, *Russko-armyanskiy slovar v odnom tome*, 2nd edn, Yerevan, 1977, p. 85; B. A. Harutyunyan, 'Administrativnoye deleniye zakavkazskikh vladeniy Sasanidskogo Irana soglasno trudu Yelishe', in Akademiya Nauk Armyanskoy SSR, Institut Vostokovedeniya, *Ḳovḳas yev Byuzandia*, Praḳ 1; *Kavkaz i Vizantiya*, vypusk 1, Yerevan, 1979, map p. 32; H. Hübschmann, 'Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen', *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 16, 1904, pp. 197–490; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 60, 116–21, 153–5.

[44] The complex problems connected with the original chronicles and existing texts are outlined in a Russian-language edition: *Letopis kartli (Pamyatniki gruzinskoy istoricheskoy literatury IV)*, Russian translation, introduction and notes by G. V. Tsulaya, Tbilisi, 1982, pp. 5–44, brief summary in English, pp. 110–13.

[45] A good brief account of early Armenian and Georgian history and its sources is given by Suny, *Making*, pp. 4–19.

[46] D. Kacharava and G. Kvirkvelia, *Wine, Worship, and Sacrifice: the Golden Graves of Ancient Vani*, edited by J. Y. Chi, New York, 2008; *From the Land of the Golden Fleece: Tomb Treasures of Ancient Georgia. Brief Guide* [to the exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 20 October 2008 – 4 January 2009]; cf. D. M. Lang, *A Modern History of Georgia*, London, 1962, p. 21.

[47] This question is complex: 'The Iberian Arsacids became extinct in the fourth century [AD], when the Crown…passed, with the hand of the last Arsacid princess…to Mirian III…the

first Christian King of Iberia…The dynasty…thus founded was called Chosroid [from Khosrou, the name of several Persian kings]…a branch of the Iranian Mihranids'; 'The Second [Armenian] Dynasty of Gogarene…belonged to the same Iranian house of Mihran, of which the Chosroids and the Guaramids [from King Vahrām] were another branch': Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 83, n. 105; pp. 334–5, 433. See also Garsoïan, 'Iran and Caucasia'.

[48] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 167–8; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, edited by A. L. Narochnitskiy, *et al.*, 4 vols. (projected), [vol. I], *S drevneyshikh vremyon do kontsa XVIII v.*, Moscow, 1988, pp. 136–7; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 141, 197, 536.

[49] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 185–6, 213, 237, 263–4, 332–4, 369–70, 387, 500, 516, 525; vol. II, pp. 141–2, 195, 197, 318–19, 411–13, 536, 538.

[50] M. Andronikashvili, *narḳvevebi iranur-kartuli enobrivi urtiertobidan*, 2 vols., Tbilisi, 1966–96, vol. I, summary in English, pp. 545–71; vol. II, part 1, summary in English, pp. 259–71; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. I, *Indoyevropeyskiye yazyki*, p. 591; vol. IV, *Iberiysko-kavkazskiye yazyki*, p. 58.

[51] Suny, *Making*, pp. 13–20.

[52] Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 447–8 and n. 40, which explains that the actions of the two emperors were conflated, then rectified, by some twentieth-century historians (cf. Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 19).

[53] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 87–8; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, p. 67; Suny, *Making*, pp. 20–5.

[54] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 205–7; Z. Sh. Didebulidze, ‘Iz istorii srednevekovoy kultury narodov Severnogo Kavkaza’, in G. D. Togoshvili, *Gruzino-Severokavkazskiye vzaimootnosheniya*, Tbilisi, 1981, p. 107; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 168–71; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 11–13; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 87–8; Suny, *Making*, pp. 20–1, 24–7; T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Harmondsworth, 1963, pp. 31, 32–4.

[55] Movses Daskhurantsi [or ‘Kałankatuatsi’], *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, translated from Armenian by C. J. F. Dowsett, London, 1961, pp. xv–xvi, 4–10, 55.

[56] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 228–35; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 264–7. The Georgians’ claim to have had their own alphabet, invented by the first king of Iberia, Parnavaz, some 300 years before the Armenian alphabet, seems extravagant: Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 309–10; Suny, *Making*, pp. 22–3, 329; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 105–6 n. 160.

[57] Illustrations of all these buildings appear in Harutyunyan, *Kamennaya letopis*, pp. 27–51; V. Beridze, *et al.*, *The Treasures of Georgia*, London, 1984, pp. 21–49; R. Mepisashvili and V. Tsintsadze, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia*, London, 1979, pp. 59–107.

[58] For instance, up to AD 428 Armenia consisted of between fifty and sixty-four states with some twenty-nine to thirty-six princely dynasties; about AD 500 forty-two states

and twenty-eight dynasties; in c. 800, twenty states and twelve dynasties: C. Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, *The Byzantine Empire*, part 1, *Byzantium and Its Neighbours*, edited by J. M. Hussey, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 595–8, 601–2; C. Toumanoff, ‘Chronology of the early kings of Iberia’, *Traditio*, 1969, 25, p. 29; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 222–9.

[59] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, edited by I. Ye. Andreyevskiy, *et al.*, 41 vols. in 82 parts, St Petersburg, 1890–1907, vol. II, p. 121.

[60] For a full recent treatment of this problem, see P. Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: a History of the Armenian Genocide*, London, 2004.

[61] His Persian nickname ‘Wolf's-head’ would be in Georgian ‘*mgel-tava*’: S. Janashia and N. Berdzenishvili, *sakartvelos istoria: saḳitkhevi tṣigni*, Tbilisi, 1980, p. 51.

[62] Suny, *Making*, pp. 23–7.

[63] Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 85–111. The title of Lang's chapter, ‘Urartu – Armenia's first nation state’, indicates that he differs from most scholars in adopting this Armenian nationalist opinion. For a different view see, e.g. the article on Urartu in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edn, 1997, *Micropaedia*, vol. I, pp. 197–8.

[64] More extensive, and eloquent, comparisons between the Georgians and the Armenians are drawn in terms now culpable of ‘political incorrectness’ in Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 71–4.

[65] S. V. Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz: geograficheskoye opisaniye v 22-kh tomakh. Armeniya*, Moscow, 1966, p. 144.

[66] Lang, *Armenia*, p. 23.

[67] ‘Transcaucasia’ will be used in this book only with reference to the region of the South Caucasus so designated officially during the existence of the Russian communist state.

[68] These are usually assumed to have been of Indo-European origin until the later irruption of the Turkic peoples, but some scholars detect the presence of Finno-Ugric peoples (mainly in place-names) as a substratum in the Caucasus from c. 1,000 BC: V. P. Kobychev, ‘Nekotorye voprosy etnogeneza i ranney etnicheskoy istorii narodov Kavkaza: finno-ugry na Kavkaze’, in *Kavkazskiy etnograficheskiy sbornik IX*, edited by N. G. Volkova and V. K. Gardanov, Moscow, 1989, pp. 10–37.

[69] R. Clogg, ‘Religion’, in B. G. Hewitt, ed., *The Abkhazians: a Handbook*, Richmond, 1999, pp. 206–7; Didebulidze, ‘Iz istorii srednevekovoy kultury’, pp. 106–8; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, 11 vols., Leiden, 1954–2008, vol. I, p. 660; vol. II, pp. 85–6; vol. III, p. 839; vol. IV, pp. 346, 573; Gabrielyan, *Armyano-alanskiye otnosheniya*, pp. 6, 46–63; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 112–14, 136–7, 173, 175–7; M. G. Mahomedov, *Obrazovaniye khazarskogo kaganata*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 166, 172; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 71–2, 82, 185, 213, 332, 370, 540; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy: etnogenez i formirovaniye naroda*, Baku, 1990, pp. 60–3.

[70] A. Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe: the Khazar Empire and Its Heritage*, London, 1977, pp. 21–3; McEvedy, Penguin Atlas of Ancient History, pp. 68–89; McEvedy, *Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, pp. 14–55; Mahomedov, *Obrazovaniye khazarskogo kaganata*, pp. 26–7, 90, 155–6.

2 Early medieval Caucasia, the seventh to tenth centuries

The Arab conquest of the Caucasus

For 200 years the frontier between the Byzantine and Persian empires roughly bisected South Caucasus, running from eastern Georgia through Lake Van to the middle Euphrates and across Jordan to the Red Sea, but early in the seventh century AD King Khosrou II of Persia pushed this line back to the west and south, adding the upper Euphrates, Syria and Egypt to his realm. Although Khosrou occupied Asia Minor up to the walls of Constantinople, in 626 a Greek counter-offensive scattered the Persians and hastened the disintegration of the Sasanian dynasty, which has been attributed to 'the material and spiritual bankruptcy of the ruling class' and the fatalism of their Mazdaist religion.[1]

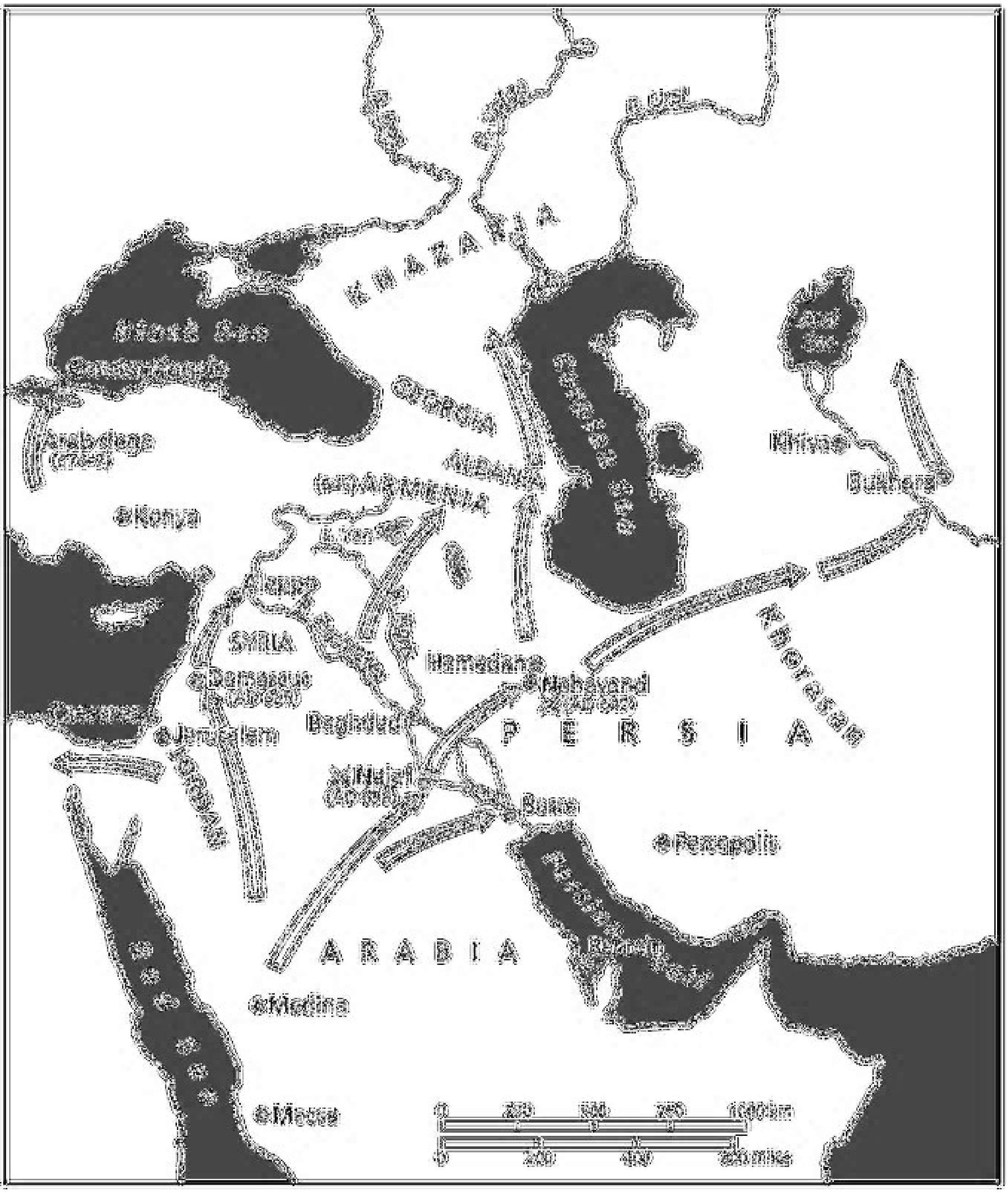
However, life in the Near East was more seriously disrupted by the new force of Islam. The spread of Christianity until then had been a mainly peaceful process, apart from early persecution by the Romans, but the next supposed revelation of God's will for the world, dictated to one man, Muhammad, in Arabia, started a long war of conquest to impose this ideology throughout the world. After the suppression of local Arab opposition in AD 632–4 the Muhammadan theocratic empire of Islam expanded inexorably among the Arab tribes, which had already spread beyond their original territory in the south of the Arabian peninsula into Syria and around the northern end of the Gulf of Persia. From its base in Mecca (1,370 miles south of Tbilisi)

Islamic conquest advanced swiftly northward to Damascus in Syria (730 miles from Tbilisi); in 636–41 Mesopotamia and western Persia (only 370 miles from Tbilisi); and in 640–5 it reached Armenia and Georgia. In 674 Constantinople came under Arab siege, and by 711 all of north Africa, from Egypt to Morocco, and southern Spain were in Muslim hands.

Launching the violence was relatively simple, but unanimity was never achieved among Arab leaders: after Muhammad's death in 632 the feuds accompanying his rise continued, and factional squabbles arose over the caliphate – who would become the successor (Arabic *khalifa*) to Muhammad's dictatorship. When he died, without a surviving son, his friend ^{c}Abu Bakr was elected as the first caliph. Muhammad's son-in-law ^{c}Ali (married to one of his daughters by the first of his eleven wives) was initially passed over, but after the murder of the second and third caliphs, ^{c}Umar and ^{c}Uthman, ^{c}Ali was elected. Squabbling over ^{c}Ali's authority, however, culminated in his murder and the succession of Mu^{c}awiyah, previously governor of Syria. The subsequent killing in 680 of ^{c}Ali's son Husayn at Kerbala in Iraq generated the most significant of Islam's many factions – the Shi^{c}ah, ‘the party’ of ^{c}Ali.[2] The Shi^{c}ites believe in the pre-eminence of ^{c}Ali and his successors, the imams – infallible authorities and intercessors between Muslims and God – only one of whom supposedly exists in any epoch. This minority sect became the dominant version of Islam in Persia, while the majority of Muslims are Sunnis – adherents of ‘custom’ (*sunnah*) and ‘tradition’ (*hadīth*) – the multifarious hearsay reports of Muhammad's sayings and behaviour which were adopted as orthodoxy (‘true teaching’), enjoying authority rivalling that of his ‘revealed’ gospel, the Koran.[3]

In describing the spread of Islam – an international struggle, with a war-machine geared explicitly to further conquest[4] – many twentieth-century historians preferred euphemisms such as ‘expansion’ or ‘dynamism’, and avoided comment on the violence inherent in Muslim empire-building. Thus bland avoidance of any suggestion of violence imbues many accounts of Muslim expansion, while Islam's supposedly compassionate attitudes are emphasized.[5] An older account of the Islamic conquests, however, shows clearly that the motivations of the new religion's zealots included: booty and subsequent taxation, much of which was applied to furtherance of the cause; vengeance-killing of dissidents; enforced submission of opponents to Islam, the alternative being death by the sword; capture and abduction of children and, especially, women left by the death of opponents, who were commonly ‘married’ or raped on the spot, or sold into concubinage or slavery.[6] So far as doctrine was concerned, Muhammad made apostasy the cardinal ‘sin’, for which the obligatory punishment was death – a rule that persisted until late in the twentieth century.[7] One thing that Islam did not bring to the Middle East was peace; assertions that Islam is a religion of peace have been contradicted by a contemporary Muslim scientist: ‘Islam – like Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or any other religion – is not about peace. Nor is it about war. Every religion is about absolute belief in its own superiority and the divine right to impose its version of truth upon others.’[8]

In AD 633 Caliph ᶜUthman's Arabs made their first raid on the Caucasus during a campaign against Persia via the Tigris–Euphrates. The conquest of Syria opened the way north, and in 637 Media Atropatene (today's ‘Iranian’, or southern, Azerbaijan) came within striking distance – Albania, Atropatene's immediate neighbour to the north, being the first of the three South Caucasian states to come under Muslim subjugation. Soon thereafter the Arabs, under ibn-Rabi^{c}a, roused a powerful enemy by striking north from Darband towards Khazaria, and in this first Arab–Khazar War (642–3) they were repulsed and 4,000 Muslims killed (see Map 6).[9]


KHAZARIA
Black Sea
Constantinople
Arab siege
Konya
GEORGIA
ALBANIA
ARMENIA
L. Van
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
Khiva
Bukhara
Khorasan
Aleppo
SYRIA
Damascus
Caesarea
Jerusalem
JORDAN
Hamadan
Nahavand
Baghdad
Najaf
Basra
PERSIA
Persepolis
Persian Gulf
Bahrain
ARABIA
Medina
Mecca
Red Sea
0 250 500 750 1000 km
0 200 400 600 miles

Map 6 The Muhammadan conquest of the ‘Middle East’ and Caucasus, AD 622–677.

Armenia and Georgia were invaded in 642 via Syria, and this first expedition took much booty and thousands of captives. In the following year, however, a second incursion in 643 from Atropatene encountered stiff resistance; the

Muslims were repulsed at Yerevan and Nakhchavan, and at Artsap Armenian cavalry under Teodoros Rshtuni, provincial High Constable for the Byzantine emperor, routed them. The Arabs then reorganized their forces and launched a third invasion in 650 which occupied Armenia's capital, Dvin, and Bishop Sebeos recorded that, when Nakhchavan and Khram castles were stormed, ‘the men were put to the sword, and the women and children enslaved’.[10] Rshtuni then submitted to the caliph, presumably because Constantinople had refused him military assistance. Having subdued Armenia, the Muslims extended their pillaging northward into Kartli, where the Georgian presiding prince sent gifts and offered to negotiate.[11] The treaty he accepted, like that concluded on behalf of Armenia by Rshtuni, was on the caliph's standard terms: the native inhabitants, if they were *dhimmis* (‘people of the book’, i.e. Jewish and Christian monotheists, ‘protected’ by Islam), were required to pay in cash a household tax, whereas people of polytheist religions (Animists, ‘pagans’, ‘idolaters’) were to be killed.[12] *Dhimmi*s were also forced to fight in the Arab army and in general to serve Muslims.

In Armenia three years’ grace was granted before taxation began, and the nobles were allowed to maintain a force of 15,000 cavalry.[13] The Armenians did not accept alien occupation and exploitation meekly: in 656 Rshtuni's successor Hamazasp Mamikonyan, with Byzantine encouragement, headed an uprising, but gained little, except that the first Umayyad caliph, Mu^{c}awiyah, briefly appointed Hamazasp's brother Grigor as *ishkhan* (prince). In the 680s the Byzantine army renewed the anti-Arab struggle in Armenia, stopped tribute payment, and a new prince, Ashot II Bagratuni, took over. Although a truce was arranged between Emperor Justinian II and the caliph, by the end of the century the Arabs resumed their subjugation of Armenia and, because of strife between princely clans, Arab oppression was reimposed, only Smbat VI Bagratuni achieving a transient triumph over them in a battle at Vardanakert in 703.[14]

From ᶜUmar (634–44) onward the caliphs appointed Arab rulers to the newly conquered provinces of their empire. Where Islam was accepted without organized opposition the native authorities were allowed to preserve some autonomy, but Arab power was asserted, especially to enforce tribute payment, and for this purpose in every big province a senior governor (*wāli*) was appointed, under whom smaller territories were administered by emirs (Arabic *ᶜamīr*). The Arabs applied the name *Arminiya* to the whole of South Caucasia, including Armenia, Georgia and Albania, for which the *wali* based in Tbilisi (Persian/Arabic 'Tiflis') held general responsibility.[15]

Under occupation by the Umayyad caliphs (661–750), whose headquarters were in Damascus, the citizens of Albania, Georgia and Armenia mainly remained Christian. The situation, however, was complicated, as the three Christian kingdoms under their emirs were tributary states providing troops and slaves, and many of their rulers were forced to become Muslims, at least nominally.[16] Moreover, the Byzantine authorities, although they had retreated before the Arab invasion, still claimed suzerainty over these countries, and as internal resistance to both overlords continued, with particularly big revolts in 681–2, Emperor Constantine IV sent an army to subdue Armenia, Georgia and Albania. In 686, indeed, Constantinople and Damascus came to an agreement to share the tribute exacted from their Caucasian vassals and, when Georgia and Albania continued to withhold payment, the Greeks occupied them and in 689 forced the caliph to cede them to the empire. The main beneficiary of this was Prince Guaram II of Kartli, who received from the emperor the Greek title 'Kouropalates' – one of the highest in the Eastern Empire.[17] However, almost immediately turmoil returned to the Caucasus, with a daunting alliance between the Arabs and the Khazars, both of whom resumed their raiding, the Khazars devastating Armenia in 689, and the Arabs with Khazar help reoccupying Armenia and Kartli in 693. The culmination of Arab ferocity in the Caucasus is associated with the name of Marwan the Deaf (later Caliph Marwan II, 744–50) whose ravaging of Armenia in 698 moved Constantinople to send aid to King Smbat VI Bagratuni.[18] An Arab chronicler relates how Caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik (685–705) sent his brother Muhammad ibn-Marwan (known in Georgian history as 'Murwan the Deaf') to subjugate the Caucasian lands of al-Jazirah, Azerbaijan and Armenia. After the reportedly enormous Byzantine–Armenian army which faced him was put to flight, Marwan treated the local people 'with consideration', reassured them of his goodwill and won their confidence. Then, to reassure himself of their loyality, he persuaded them all to go into their churches to swear submission to him. The Arabs then nailed all the church doors shut and set the buildings on fire with naphtha. The narrator expresses no shame, saying only, 'To this day these are still known as the burned churches.'[19]

For the region's big powers – that is, the Byzantine Empire, the Muslim caliphate, and the Khazar khanate – after Sasanid Persia's eclipse by Islam in 642 (see below) the fate of the peoples of the Caucasus was incidental to their larger, imperial concerns. Among these, conflicts of religious belief were fundamental, but often ambiguous. Although Armenia, Georgia and Albania were Christian, they did not automatically receive preferential treatment from Constantinople, the worst consequence being that local vassal rulers no longer counted as kings, but merely as ‘presiding princes’ appointed by the emperor. After Emperor Maurice's victory over the Persians in 591, Armenia had come within the Byzantine Empire, but ‘the Armenians…now had to endure all the rigours of centralisation and officialdom, foreign to their dynastic-feudal ideas. Like Justinian, Emperor Maurice resorted to mass deportation of Armenians to Europe. Iranian suzerainty appeared light in comparison, and the court in Ctesiphon was not slow in assuming the role of protector of the Armenian princes.’[20]

However, Persian power in Armenia was again usurped in 653, this time by the caliphate. Constantinople's imperial authorities could not have anticipated that tent-dwelling nomads and traders from the desert with their newly proclaimed religion would require much attention, or that the Arabs’ raiding tactics could defeat the might of the Byzantine legions. Yet the Arab challenge had to be taken up and the authority of the empire imposed and respected: ‘The following two centuries were marked…by a fierce tug-of-war between Byzantine interference and Saracen reprisal, with the presiding princes [of Armenia and Iberia] wavering between the two allegiances and national consolidation thwarted by ceaseless strife. All imperial attempts to regain Caucasia proved abortive.’[21]

If some Armenian and Georgian princes were unscrupulous in switching loyalties, emperors and caliphs were no more constant in forming and breaking temporary alliances with each other. For instance, during a general liberation movement in Armenia in the late seventh century, the Armenian nobility was so disunited that, while Ashot

Bagratuni went over to the Arab side, Smbat Bagratuni led an anti-Arab revolt which was quelled harshly by Muhammad ibn Okbey, and Emir ^{c}Abdullah consistently persecuted the Armenian nobles.[22] After Teodor Rshtuni's submission to the Arabs, Emperor Constans II repeatedly tried to disrupt Armenia's relations with them by sending punitive expeditions against Armenia – one of them an army of 20,000 men led by the emperor himself. When Rshtuni's successor, Hamazasp Mamikonyan, appointed by the caliph in 655, went over to the emperor and refused to pay tribute, the new caliph ^{c}Ali responded by slaughtering nearly 1,800 Armenian hostages. In the caliphate's next dynastic revolution in 661 Mu^{c}awiyah appointed Grigor I Mamikonyan (a hostage in Arab hands) as prince of Armenia. However, the succession of Caliph Yazid I in 680 once again encouraged turmoil: after Emperor Justinian II's second attempt to take over in Armenia, whose leaders withheld taxes from the Arabs, 'The Caliph…transferred his favour from the Mamikonids to the Bagratids…[Ashot II] in Armenia and, in Iberia, from the Chosroids to the Guaramids [Guaram II].'[23] As the struggle between Byzantium and the caliphate for control of Armenia was renewed by ^{c}Abd al-Malik, Armenia, 'enervated by squabbles between its princely clans…became incapable of further resistance to its Arab conquerors and fell under their yoke for the next 150 years'.[24]

The incessant warfare between Byzantium and the Arabs continued, with Constantinople under siege in 674–78 and 717–18, and fighting on the Asia Minor border. A new development about AD 700 was an appeal from the Black Sea rulers of Lazica and Abkhazia for Arab help against Byzantium, which brought Arab garrisons to the forts at Tsikhegoji and the river Kodor. In response, the emperor bribed the Alans to attack Abkhazia, and eventually Levan III expelled the Arabs from Abkhazia and Lazica. Nor was it easy for the Arabs to subjugate Kartli and Ḳakheti[25] and, as one (Soviet) Georgian historian states, even Arab attempts to set the lower classes against the nobles failed because Caucasian feudal society was ‘too vigorous and stable’.[26] Not even the notoriously cruel Marwan ibn-Muhammad, sent with punitive forces to occupy all of south Caucasus, could bring the Georgians, Armenians and Albanians to heel. In the 740s Byzantine influence was reasserted,[27] and the peoples of south Caucasus took advantage of a civil war in the caliphate to stage a revolt, during which leadership in Armenia was taken over by Grigor II Mamikonyan, while Prince Ashot Bagratuni, who had defected to the Arabs, was blinded by the insurgents.[28]

By 750, when the first caliph of the ^{c}Abbasid dynasty came to power, it was clear that the caliphate's manpower (until then almost exclusively Arab) was overstretched in garrisoning its ever-increasing empire. To remedy this problem, Caliph al-Mansur (754–75) began to recruit non-Arab Muslims, especially Persians, for posts in the administration – despite previous discrimination against them. Thus the Arabs gradually relinquished their monopoly of power, and the transfer of the capital in 762 from Damascus to Baghdad in Iraq, formerly part of the Sasanian empire, led to increased Persian influence and ‘a perceptible orientalisation of the Caliphate’.[29]

From 750 onward the ^{c}Abbasids made a serious attempt to subjugate Armenia by increasing their garrisons in Dvin, Tigranakert and other towns, and opening its plains to nomadic Turks who drove Armenian peasants into the mountains. The caliphate also offered privileges to collaborative nobles and clergy, which strengthened princely families such as the Bagratunis, Artsrunis and Syunis, but penalized ordinary citizens by levying increased taxes on all males between 15 and 60, using harsh coercion, especially under Harun ar-Rashid (786–809). This provoked popular rebellion and Muslim reprisals, for instance in 762 when, during a raid on Vaspurakan the Arabs killed thousands of insurgents, including their leader, an Artsruni prince. As the uprising spread to Shirak and other districts, the rebels, led by Mushegh Mamikonyan, won several battles, but the Armenian nobles were disunited, and those who rebelled suffered Arab retribution – at worst execution, at least deprivation of their hereditary titles. In the case of the pro-Byzantine Mamikonyan family, their titles of 'prince' (*ishkhan*) and 'commander-in-chief' (*sparapet*) were transferred to the more co-operative Bagratuni family. Some Armenian lords, observing the ferocity of their own peasants, withdrew from the struggle, abandoning them to the mercy of the Arabs.[30] Arab reprisals culminated in massacres of whole families of the nobility, particularly in Bagrevand province in 772–5, where some families were practically wiped out. As a result, for decades Armenia was devoid of its local aristocracy – except for some of the Bagratunis who, still enjoying Arab favour, took over their rivals' estates and by 800 owned a large proportion of Armenia's land.[31]

The contemporary Armenian historian Ghevond (or Levon) described al-Hadi, one of the ^{c}Abbasid caliphs (785–6) as 'A vicious, unbridled, ferocious man…Cruel to the point of insanity, he used men as targets for archery practice', and the emir he sent to govern Armenia 'subjected the country to war and Inferno'.[32] Nevertheless, sporadic uprisings still occurred in the ninth and tenth centuries, while the caliphate's control over the emirate of Arminiya continued to slip, and there was general defiance of caliphal authority in Tiflis. In 850–2 the local emirs’ continual misappropriation of state tribute to their own coffers provoked a revolt led by Princes Bagrat Bagratuni and Ashot Artsruni of Taron. This, however, brought upon them a punitive expedition led by Caliph Mutawakkil's viceroy, the Turkish general Bugha, who crushed the insurrection with implacable cruelty, burning the city to the ground and executing the emir, after which Tbilisi ceased to be the Islamic capital.[33]

Bagratid Georgia's rise and Armenia's demise

It was at this time that one of the best-known Georgian hagiographies was written: the *Martyrdom of Abu Tbileli*, the story of an Arab boy whose sympathy with the Georgians’ sufferings under the caliphate made him abjure Islam for Christianity – paying the price with a martyr's death. The story, written by Ioann Sabanisdze, embodies a call to the Georgian people to unite and resist their oppressors.[34]

In Kartli the aristocracy led anti-Arab rebellions, sometimes in league with the Khazars, which the *wali* suppressed ruthlessly, decapitating many nobles and persecuting their families. By the end of the eighth century both Kartli–Iberia and Armenia ‘had…reached a political nadir’, and many of their citizens emigrated into Byzantine territory. The royal lines descended from Khosrou and Guaram were almost totally annihilated – while the Bagrationis went on from strength to strength.[35]

A confusing feature of South Caucasian medieval history is the ‘overlapping’ and ‘constantly fluctuating frontier line’[36] between the Armenian and Georgian kingdoms. Some of these changes were commonplace annexations familiar in many regions. For instance, in the second century BC the Armenians annexed Iberia's northern borderland, which, as the Duchy of Gogarene, became their front line against Iberia and Albania; then, as Armenia's fortunes changed in the first century AD, this reverted to Iberia. Thereafter it went to and fro between them at least eight times until the sixth century.[37]

In the Armenian borderlands taken over by Georgia, Armenian persisted, so that in Gogarene this was still the liturgical language in the seventh century AD, and even when, to the indignation of the Armenians, it was replaced by Georgian, the province continued to be called Somkheti – the Georgian name for Armenia. In fact, early Armenian historians ‘treat…Albania and Iberia as dependencies of Armenia’, and Armenian monarchs claimed control over the whole Caucasus region,[38] so that Georgians today resent a supposed assumption by Armenians of the greater antiquity of Armenian culture.

While some of the outlying parts of Iberia/Georgia, particularly Kakheti and Hereti in the east, and the mountains of Imereti in the west, succeeded in preserving their autonomy under Arab domination, a striking piece of empire-building began under Adarnase III Nersiani, one of the ‘Armeno-Georgian princes’ of the Bagratuni/Bagrationi family, after the decimation of the Armenian nobility in 775.[39] According to one historian, this ‘brave and cunning, greedy clan’ from the western principality of Klarjeti in the Chorokhi valley started acquiring Armenian borderlands in Tao and on the upper Kura and – ‘playing their prospects between the kings of Armenia and Iberia, the Byzantines and the Persians – began to build the power which was to bring them later to the Armenian and Georgian thrones’. In the ninth century a successor, Ashot of Tao, designated ‘Kouropalates’,[40] ‘built himself a fine baron's capital at Ardanuchi commanding the Chorokhi gorges and the way from Ani and Kars to the Black Sea…[and the] Caliphs allowed other sprigs of the Bagrationi stem to enclose those two great trading fortress-cities’.[41]

The Bagrationis had gained more lands not only in Armenia, but also in Iberia – northern Kartli, Samtskhe and Trialeti – so that only Kakheti, lying east of the Tiflis Emirate on the Albanian border, remained beyond their reach.[42] Early in the ninth century the caliph, with

> his own Arab emirs growing ever more independent of Baghdad…decided to rely on the Bagratids to enforce his authority. When the emir of Tbilisi…revolted against the caliph and was joined by the *mtavari* [ruling prince] of Kakheti, the caliph appointed Ashot I Bagratuni the prince of Kartli-Iberia…[and] obliged [him] to fight the rebel Arabs and their Georgian supporters.

In 813 Ashot I of Iberia also received recognition from Emperor Leo V (an Armenian) and, like many subject princes, the Greek title ‘Kouropalates’.[43]

In the late ninth century the caliphate passed through a period of disintegration into more or less independent emirates, which provided an opportunity for the revival of the Armenian state. Taking advantage of slackened central control, in 875 the Armenian catholicos Zakare Dzagetsi convened an assembly of provincial rulers which declared

Armenia's independence. Ten years later another Ashot Bagratuni (of Shirak) was acknowledged as the senior among his ‘turbulent cousins and contemporaries’. In 885 he was crowned as Ashot I ‘the Great’ of the restored kingdom of Armenia, and was recognized by both Caliph al-Mu^{c}tamid and Emperor Basil I. Not all Armenian princes, however, agreed to unification under the Bagratunis, and the neighbouring emir of Atropatene, Yusuf, declared Gagik Artsruni king of Armenia instead of Ashot the Great's son Smbat I (890–914), whose cruel execution at the hands of Yusuf earned him canonization as a martyr by the Gregorian Church. Smbat's son, Ashot II ‘the Iron’ (914–28), carried on a war of liberation for nine years, culminating in victory over the Muslims in a battle near Lake Sevan.[44] He thus maintained ‘the hegemony of the Shirakian branch of the Bagratunis…over all the Armenian lands and neighbouring parts of Georgia and Kurdistan’,[45] and was recognized by both emperor and caliph as Armenia's ‘King of Kings’.[46]

According to one historian the common source of kings of Armenia and Georgia in the Bagratuni/Bagrationi royal family amounted to a joint Armeno-Georgian ‘supra-national, dynastic condominium of the Bagratids. The King of Armenia was its doyen and the King of Iberia second after him.’[47] However, this Bagratid monopoly was undermined by continuing intervention in Caucasia by the Byzantines and the caliphate, leading to further fluctuating loyalties. Ashot the Great of Armenia established a practice, adhered to by most of his successors, of ‘scrupulous loyalty towards the caliph’, but now several Armenian and Georgian princes went over to the other side. Ashot the Iron, who expelled the Arabs from much of Armenia, negotiated an anti-Muslim alliance with the emperor, annexed the disputed territories of Samshvilde, Gardman and Otene, and in 923 assumed the title of ‘King of Kings’ over his Christian neighbours, which the caliph confirmed by sending him a crown and recognizing him as Shahinshah. Thus, briefly, ‘Armenia reached the apogee of power, prosperity and cultural achievement.’[48] This continued under Kings Abas (928–52) and Ashot III (952–77), who reconstructed the economy and towns, including the ancient city of Ani with its great cathedral, which became the capital of Armenia again in 961. Other major Armenian cities in the Middle Ages included Kars with its formidable fortress, and Karin, later renamed Erzurum, both of which were flourishing trade centres on important caravan routes. Despite all this, the kingdom of Armenia was handicapped by lack of political unity: ‘The economic links between its various provinces were weak, each feudal principality pursued its own economic and political interests, and centrifugal tendencies among the feudal aristocracy led to the formation of numerous petty kingdoms and principalities…Vaspurakan, Vanand, Lori, Syunik, Taron, Khachen’, etc. Although Armenia flourished under Gagik I (989–1020), its fate was sealed by the contemporary revival of the Byzantine Empire under Basil II. His aggressive campaigns overcame the Bagratids of Taron (966) and the Artsrunis of Vaspurakan, and after Gagik's death the Greeks used intrigue and threats to foment strife among the various aristocratic and ecclesiastical factions in Ani and Shirak over the next forty years. The early eleventh century brought further disaster: in 1020, Shirak – all that remained of the royal territory – was divided between Gagik I's two sons, Hovhannes-Smbat III and Ashot IV. They fought over it, while the rulers of Georgia, the caliphate and the Byzantine Empire interfered. Hovhannes-Smbat, having bequeathed his kingdom in advance to the emperor, left confusion on his death in 1040. Some nobles attempted to retain the kingdom in the name of the boy-king Gagik II, but he was enticed to Constantinople, imprisoned and executed thirty-four years later. Vahram P̣ahlavuni's army defended Ani valiantly, but treachery allowed the Greeks to seize the city, and Armenia was incorporated into the Byzantine Empire in 1045, thus bringing about the extinction of Armenia as an independent kingdom – just when the Seljuq-led hosts of Central Asian Turkmens were beginning their westward advance through the Caucasus.[49]

Armenia as a whole fell under Seljuq rule in the middle of the eleventh century, and as the Armenians were gradually evicted from fertile lowland areas by nomadic Turkmen bands, their former urban communities disintegrated and were absorbed into what were now the emirates of Ani, Dvin, Kars, Khlat and Karin. A few Armenian principalities, each under its own *melik* (derived from the Arabic for ‘king’) maintained a precarious independent existence in the face of the Turkish menace. Of these only Sasun and Aghtamar succeeded in defending their freedom over a long period, while Vanand, Syunik, Lori and others were forced into submission by the thirteenth century.[50]

At the end of the tenth century the Georgians had revived under the leadership of Davit II ‘the Great’ of Upper Ṭao (990–1000), whose timely intervention in Asia Minor against an anti-Byzantine uprising in the 970s had allowed him to annex large areas of Armenia, thereby becoming ‘the most powerful prince in Caucasia’ – although on his death in 1000 these lands were claimed by Emperor Basil II. In 1008, however, Bagrat III, having inherited both eastern and western Georgia and united them, also added Ḳakheti and Klarjeti to his realm, thus re-establishing Georgia's predominance.[51]

By the early eleventh century the Seljuq invaders had occupied much of central Armenia, including Ararat, Ani, Syunik and Lori, but a counter-attack by Georgian and Armenian forces began at the end of the twelfth century. Among the manifold diplomatic achievements of the most powerful monarch in the Caucasus – Queen Tamar of Georgia (1184–1213) – was an alliance with the rulers of north-eastern Armenia – the two brothers, Zakhare and Ivane, of the Zakharid dynasty, known in Georgia by the surname Mkhargrdzeli (Long-arm). Zakhare governed the western provinces – Lori, Ani, Aragatsotn, Bagrevand, Tsakhkotn, Kogovit and others, while Ivane held Bzhni, Gelakuni, Vayots-Dzor, Syunik, Dvin, Yerevan and parts of Artsakh. Other contemporary Armenian princely families included the Vakhramyans, who held Amberd castle, Gardman and Parisos; the Orbelyans, with estates in Vayots-Dzor and Gelakuni; and the Proshians, whose territories included two of Armenia's most famous monasteries, Gheghard and Gladzor, the latter famous for its university.[52] Between 1199 and 1203 the combined forces of Georgia and Armenia attacked the Seljuq emirates occupying Dvin, Ani and Ganja, liberating the whole territory of north-eastern Armenia, including Amberd, Bzhni, Ararat, Shirak, Syunik, Bagrevand and Kars.[53]

Thus fragments of northern Armenia continued to exist, as vassals of the Georgian kings, and thanks to their efforts. As we shall see, another small Armenian state, known as Cilicia or Little Armenia, maintained a precarious existence in the south-east corner of Asia Minor, for nearly 300 years as a by-product of the Crusades (see Chapter 4). But no autonomous country of Armenia would exist until the twentieth century, when a short-lived independent Democratic Republic of

Armenia was founded in May 1918 and later annexed by Soviet Russia.

Caucasian Albania

The country south of Darband, from the river Samur to the lower reaches of the Kura and Araxes, was Caucasian Albania, a vassal of Persia. It incorporated what is now part of southern Daghestan and the whole of Azerbaijan, and was a populous region with many towns, including Shaki, Kabala and Shamakha below the eastern spur of the mountains in the north, and Partav and Bailakan on the Kura–Araxes plain. The early Greek geographer Strabo was enthusiastic about Albania:

> In many places…they say, the land when sown only once produces two crops or even three…The plain…is better watered by its rivers…than the Babylonian and Egyptian plains…The inhabitants…are usually handsome and large…[F]rank in their dealings…they do not in general use coined money…but carry on business by…barter, and otherwise live an easy-going life…They send forth a greater army than…the Iberians; for they equip 60,000 infantry and 22,000 horsemen, the number with which they risked their all against Pompey.[54]

A tenth-century Armenian chronicler also described Albania as ‘fair and alluring, with many natural advantages. The great river Kur…bearing fish large and small…the plains round about…[providing] much bread and wine, naphtha and salt, silk and cotton, and innumerable olive trees’.[55] Today this is still a favoured region, since its uplands, with their moderate rainfall, provide good alpine pastures and subtropical mountain forest, while the dry steppe of its plains, now under irrigation, supports the cultivation of cereals, fruit, vegetables and cotton.[56]

Albania's neighbours to the west were Iberia and Armenia, and to the south Media's province of Atropatene. The first Romans invading from Asia Minor, led by Pompey, passed through Albania on their campaigns against Persia, so that the Albanians witnessed recurrent warfare between Rome and Persia from the first century BC. It was perhaps at this time that the Persians, in order to strengthen their control, brought the Iranian-speaking Tat people into Albania as auxiliary troops.

Although the Persians had established Zoroastrianism among the Albanians, a Christian missionary from Jerusalem, Eliseus, preached in Albania in the second century AD and built a church in Chogha (Armenian, also Chogha) at the mouth of the Samur.[57] Armenian missionaries later converted the population of Caucasian Albania and southern Daghestan to Christianity, while Georgian missionaries propagated Christianity in North Caucasus, particularly among the Alans.[58]

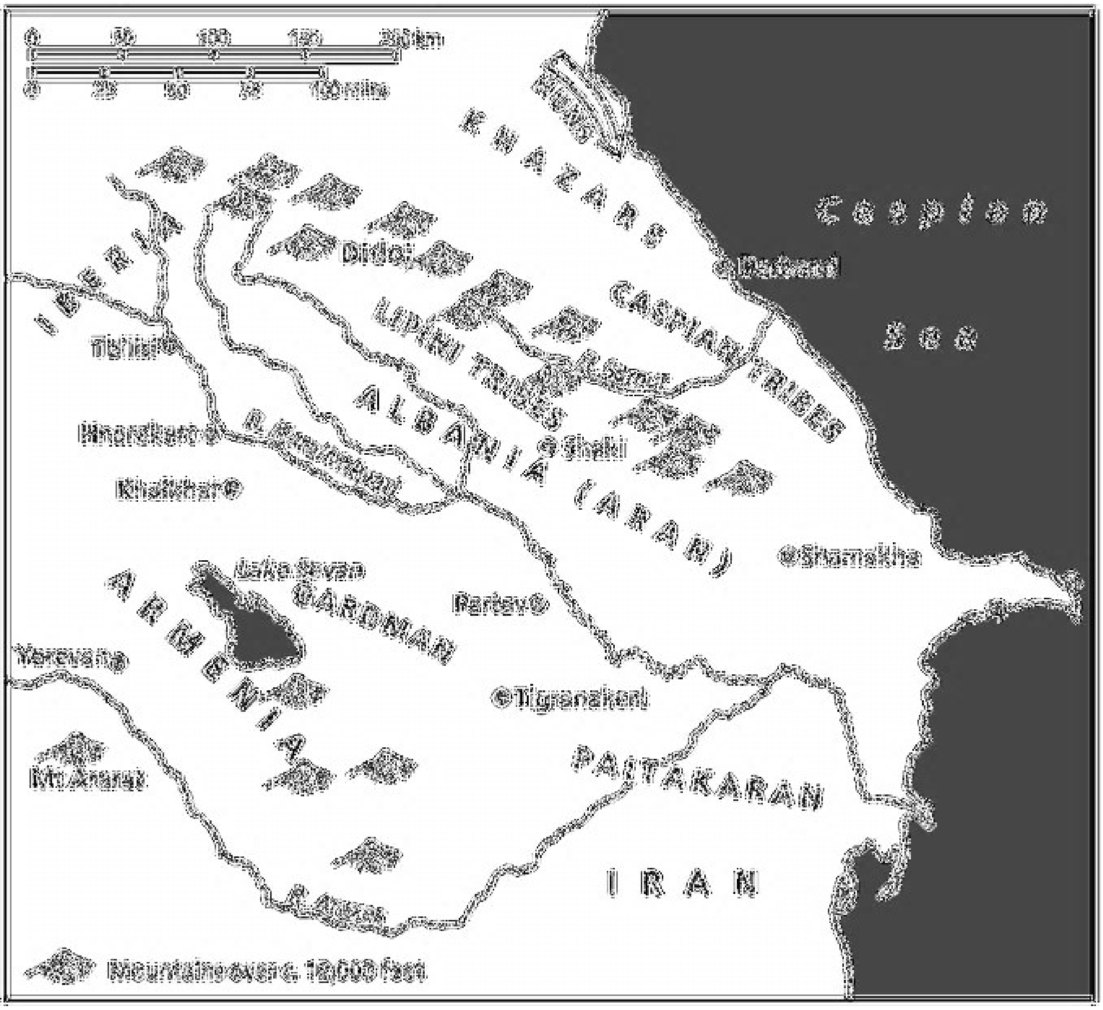
The fact that Albania was converted by the Armenian church had significant consequences. One was that their dogma was Monophysite; another that, as the only early history of Albania, written by Movses Daskhurantsi, probably in the eleventh century, is in Armenian, and not in whatever was the native language of Albania, it seems likely that the Albanians had not yet devised an alphabet for their language, but that some of them were literate in Armenian. Their church had to be subject to some higher ecclesiastical authority, and Movses's history records rivalry between the

Albanian and Armenian churches, both as to which was founded earlier, and which had the higher-ranking head – patriarch or archbishop.[59] Albanian and Georgian Christians seem to have lived on good terms in the early days, when St Grigoris's episcopal see included both Iberia and Albania, but after 451 the doctrinal clash between Georgian Chalcedonianism and Armenian Monophysitism generated fierce mutual antagonism, at least among the clergy.[60]

Other questions arising from the political geography of the Armenians and Albanians are more mundane, but remain highly relevant at the present day, since they concern historical territories and what are now international boundaries within Caucasia. Today the label 'Russia' on maps, both historical and political, is all too readily applied to areas such as Ukraine, the Eurasian steppe or North Caucasus – colonial territories which, ethnically and historically, are not and never have been 'part of Russia' – except in a loose usage implying 'by conquest annexed to the Russian Empire' and held in the USSR until (or after) its demise in 1991.[61] Similarly, other labels, such as 'Azerbaijan', are still accepted anachronistically to cover territory whose attribution to that country dates no farther back than conquest by Russia in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, or Turkey's participation in the First World War and the formation of the Russian Communist Party state in 1918–22.

During the first millennium AD the whole territory north of the Araxes which today forms the Republic of Azerbaijan was Albania[62] and, apart from Persian troops and administrators, would have had no significant ethnic links with the Persian province of Media Atropatene/Azerbaijan. It is unknown who, ethnically, formed the native population of this country.

Map 7 shows its principal geographical features, particularly the confluence of the rivers Kura/Mtkvari (flowing in from Georgia in the north-west) and Araxes (arising in the Armenian mountains and joining the Kura from the south-west) defining two sections of the plain. The triangle of land between the south bank of the Kura and the Araxes, including Armenian Artsakh and Syunik (later Highland Karabagh and the Zangezur mountain region) was known as Aran. Later, most of this plain, along with the outlying Caucasus spurs and the Caspian coast, was called Shirvan, while Albania continued to occupy at least the north as far as the Samur, where Persia's stronghold of Darband lay.


0 50 100 150 200 km
0 25 50 75 100 miles
HUNS
KHAZARS
Caspian Sea
Derbend
CASPIAN TRIBES
Didoi
LIPINI TRIBES
IBERIA
Tiflis
ALBANIA (ARAN)
Shaki
Shamakha
Khalkhal
Lake Sevan
GARDMAN
Partav
ARMENIA
Yerevan
Tigranakert
Mt Ararat
PAITAKARAN
IRAN
Mountains over c. 12,000 feet

Map 7 Caucasian Albania (c. 400 BC–AD 900) in relation to the north-west frontier of the Persian Empire, with Armenia, Iberia (later known as Georgia), the Khazars and Huns, as well as the Lipini (in Armenian Lip^{h}ink^{h}) and other mountain tribes; based on the map accompanying H. Hübschmann, ‘Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen’, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 16, 1904, pp. 197–490.

Aran is often spelt ‘Arran’, and Azerbaijani historians have used this name to justify their anachronistic claim that this whole territory, coinciding with the twentieth-century Azerbaijanian Soviet Republic (otherwise known as ‘Russian Azerbaijan’ or ‘northern Azerbaijan’, as distinct from ‘southern’ or ‘Persian Azerbaijan’) has, at least since the Arab conquest, had a Turkish-speaking population – and that ‘Arran’ was originally ‘al-Ran’, which by normal Arabic grammatical rules became ‘ar-Ran’. A Georgian scholar points out that the Parthians in the third century AD called Albania ‘Ardān’, which in Middle Persian became ‘Arrān’, so that there is no reason to resort to an Arabic etymology.[63] There is a strong case for accepting the view of the Lezgi (Daghestani) scholars M. Ikhilov and G. Abdurahimov, that ‘The geographical facts presented by early writers…allow us to conclude that the whole territory of today's Azerbaijan and southern Daghestan was the territory of Caucasian Albania’, and ‘this…leads to the conclusion that Albania consisted exclusively of the territories of present-day Azerbaijan and southern Daghestan’, including Aran and Artsakh.[64]

To return to Armenia's role in Albania, in the early Christian period Armenia was a large and populous country with a complex social structure and considerable military power. Cattle-rearing and agriculture as well as the cultivation of grapes and olives flourished, and there was a long tradition of irrigation, woodworking and metallurgy.[65] Armenia's core territory occupied the plateau where several great rivers arose: the 1,180-mile long Tigris and its upper tributary the Great Zab, and the 1,700-mile long Euphrates with its many feeders snaking down the valleys of eastern Anatolia and Syria to meander in parallel through the marshy plain of Mesopotamia and debouch into the Persian Gulf. Flowing through the Armenian plateau in the opposite direction are both the Araxes (its source separated by only a dozen miles from that of the Euphrates, near Erzurum) and the Kura (848 miles long, rising near Kars, less than 40 miles from the Araxes). Armenia had two great lakes – Van at 5,640 feet, and Sevan at 6,320 feet – while a third, Lake Urmiah, lay east of a mountain range, at 4,900 feet in Persian Azerbaijan.

The Armenians were much disposed to travel and settlement in new places, as an exhaustive survey of all known historically Armenian settlements in Caucasia, published in 1904, demonstrates.[66] Hübschmann's map leaves the whole region to the north-east of the lower Kura devoid of any place-names, indicating that this was Albania. On the other hand, it shows many districts and towns with Albanian names south of the Kura in what is now Azerbaijan territory, from the Debed–Khrami confluence to Artsakh (northern Highland Karabagh) which were Albanian in the early Middle Ages. These included Kołb, Dzor, Khałkhał, Gardman, Shakashen, Kołt, Uti, Partav and Khachen. This suggests that the mysterious Albanians, like their Armenian and Iberian neighbours, were active and acquisitive, and had advanced up the Kura valley through Hereti towards Ḳakheti, occupying towns which had formerly been Armenian, and in AD 450 driving the Persians out of the former winter residence of King Ardeshir I, Khałkhał.

By the fifth century the Albanians were literate, with an alphabet different from those of Armenian and Georgian. The language of the few extant writings in this script was not deciphered until 1993, when a Lezgi scholar claimed to have identified it as that of the Lezgis, a relatively numerous Daghestani people who live on both sides of the Samur.[67] As in Iberia and Armenia, there were Albanian uprisings in the fifth century which evoked Persian punitive campaigns and the replacement of local princes by Persian governors (*marzban*s) based in the Albanian capital Kabala.

The Persians did not at first tolerate Christianity, especially under Shah Yazdgard II (439–57), who sent priests to reimpose Zoroastrianism on Albania and Armenia. After rebellions occurred, however, the shah granted religious toleration, until Albania's King Vachagan III the Pious (487–510) started persecuting Zoroastrians and building new churches, with the result that on his death the Persians did not permit the succession of a new king, and introduced rule by provincial governors. However, even this did not undermine Christianity, and after the Monophysite unification of the Albanian, Armenian and Georgian churches at Dvin in 506, the authority of the Albanian church was increased in 552 when its head, Ter-Abbas, received the title of catholicos. At the same time Albania's political and ecclesiastical capital was moved to Partav (later Bardha^{c}a in Arabic) between present-day Karabagh and the Kura – nearer to Armenia and Georgia, but farther from Darband and the Caspian corridor used by raiders from the north. On the other hand, the Albanian church used that route to send missionaries to the Alans and Sabirs (Turkic predecessors of the Khazars in North Caucasus) among whom a monastery was founded in western Alania about the sixth century.

Despite the flexibility granted to Albania in matters of religion, the Persians still showed that they were the masters: after the death of the catholicos in 596 his successor Viro was arrested for alleged participation in an uprising, banished to Persia, and detained there for twenty-five years, while the building of Zoroastrian fire-temples proceeded in Albania. Nevertheless, Viro was allowed to maintain contact with Albania, exercising his ecclesiastical authority in absentia, and he persuaded the shah to grant the title ‘Lord of Gardman and Prince of Albania’ to Albanian descendants of the royal line of Mihran.[68] Albania had a developed civilization by the seventh century AD, but little of this survived the subsequent assaults by Arabs, Khazars and Seljuq Turks, except a few ruined churches in areas adjacent to Georgia which are now in Azerbaijan, and some remnants of fortifications in the vicinity of Darband.[69]

The Caucasian Albanians were converted to Christianity by the Armenians and were greatly influenced by their culture, especially in areas south of the Kura, where many Armenians settled and intermarriage took place. In the north, Persian influence was stronger, since Sasanian shahs had striven to consolidate their empire's frontier by sending Persians to settle in the numerous small principalities of the region; some Khazars, too, had settled in northern Albania, especially in Kabala. When the Albanians first came under Arab attack in 637, their Mihranid prince, Jevanshir (or Juansher), Lord of Gardman, who had been defending the Persian frontier, hurried back home. However, the Muslim army, having overrun Tabriz and Ardabil, advanced north to capture Shaki and Shamakha, and in 643 it stormed Darband (in Arabic 'Bāb al-Abwāb', 'Gate of Gates').[70] The Arabs extorted tribute until 656, when the Albanians expelled them during the turmoil in Arabia surrounding ^{c}Ali's succession to the caliphate. Jevanshir then made a defensive alliance with Emperor Constans II – having already attempted to ensure powerful alliances all round by marrying a daughter of the Alan king.[71] As Jevanshir's alliance with Constantinople failed, and as he was also attacked from the north by the Khazars (a misfortune which Albania suffered sixteen times between 623 and 799), he decided to negotiate with Caliph Mu^{c}awiyah I, and travelled to Damascus twice to obtain recognition. However, his adoption of the title 'Prince of Albania' angered the Albanian nobles, and in 670 Jevanshir was murdered.[72]

The principal towns in Albania included Bailakan, Partav, Gandzak, Kabala, Shamkhur and Shaki, some of which became important centres, but in general Albania was divided among many petty lordships, often subject to the Khazars. In the early eighth century the Arab assault on Albania was renewed, and many of its aristocracy were deported to Syria. Partav was seized and the whole country occupied, and Albania lost its statehood, while Arab settlers moved in. With Bardha^{c}a (Partav) as their base the Arabs extended their operations, and in 714 Habib ibn-Maslam stormed Darband, thus opening the way for a raid northward through Tabasaran and Kaitagh, pursuing the Khazars to their stronghold of Semender. The Arabs returned to Albania with many Daghestani prisoners, but the combined forces of the Khazars, Lezgis and other Daghestanis drove them out across the Araxes. Although skirmishing continued along the Daghestan border, no decisive Arab victory occurred, and in 735 it became the Albanians' and Daghestanis' turn to experience the ferocity of the caliphs' mass executioner, Marwan the Deaf. He made punitive expeditions deep into the mountains against the Kumuks, Kubachis and Avars, and imposed a heavy tribute in wheat on the Lezgis. The culmination of Arab oppression came with the 'Abbasid caliphate: Harun ar-Rashid appointed a new governor in Darband whose régime was so cruel that in 797 the Muslims themselves rose against him, led by the son of a local emir who had been killed by the caliph.[73]

By the second decade of the ninth century the caliphate was ruined by the need to pay huge armies of mercenaries, while provincial emirs increasingly disregarded the caliph's orders, and internal conflicts arose. The Albanian and Armenian dynasties survived with some autonomy, subject to their emirs, and paying taxes in Islamic coinage. About 820, after Albania's last king of the Mihran dynasty, Varaz Trdat, was assassinated, one of the local Muslim rulers, Sahl bin-Sumbat, ruler of Shaki, seized power in Albania. This was just when Albania and Atropatene were shaken by a widespread anti-Arab revolt (c. 816–38) led by Babak – part of of a century-long wave of Persian rebellions throughout the caliphate, inspired by Mazdakism, a Zoroastrian revival with religious and political aims. Sahl offered a welcome to Babak, but betrayed him to the Arabs, thereby winning confirmation as ruler of Albania.[74]

Although Albania as a state disappeared in the tenth century, its name was not totally erased until the Seljuq conquest of the Caucasus in the eleventh century. Thereafter it was the newly emerging Azerbaijan that claimed succession to the ethnic inheritance left by former Albania. So far as recent times are concerned, the memory of Albania provided a legend to be revived and appropriated by various Caucasian nationalists in the twentieth century as the basis for claims to possession of former Albanian lands. Historically there is no continuity between ancient Albania and any one modern state. None of its self-proclaimed heirs possesses evidence of an indisputable right to inherit, but at least six peoples of the region have been proposed or have asserted claims as successors, on some basis of history or ethnic affinity.

On linguistic grounds many scholars agree that the most likely descendants of the Albanians living today are the Uti or Udin people, who were known to Pliny the Elder as one of the native peoples of South Caucasus.[75] Today only a few thousand Udins survive, divided between two villages (Vartashen and Kutkashen) in Azerbaijan and one (Oktembri) near Kvareli in Georgia. They show their historical connection with Armenia in still professing the Monophysitism of the Armenian-Gregorian Church.[76]

Armenian scholars have real grounds for claiming Armenia's predominant role in Albanian history through territorial contiguity, religion and cultural development. The earliest account of Albania (Armenian *Aghvank* or *Aluank*)[77] is the *History of the Land of Albania* (*Paṭmutyun Aghvanits ashkharhi*) written in Armenian, probably by Movses of Daskhuran or Kałankatuk.[78] The editors of the eulogy on the death of Jevanshir already mentioned explain that the poet, Dawt'ak Kertoł, ‘lived either in Armenia or in its north-eastern regions which had been made a part of Aluank’, i.e. Utik and Artsakh. As we have seen, the fact that the Albanian church was Monophysite confirms its strong links with Armenia. Moreover, in Albania, where several different languages were spoken, ‘Armenian was…the language of inter-ethnic communication’, and the only surviving sources for Albanian history are in Armenian.[79] According to one twentieth-century Russian specialist on the history of the Caucasus, a majority of the Albanians converted to Islam, while those who remained Christian became Armenianized.[80] Although scholars in Russia before 1917 acknowledged the special relationship between Albania and Armenia,[81] the standard communist history of Armenia avoided mentioning this, saying only that Albania was under Armenian influence during Tigran I's reign in the first century BC.[82]

Georgians have been more assertive than Armenians in claiming Georgian suzerainty over medieval Albania, with communist historians basing Georgia's claim to Albania on the assertion that Hereti – a district east of Ḳakheti – was identical with Aran or western Albania, and associating it with the Her people, ‘a Kartvelian tribe living in old Albania’.[83] This is contradicted by C. Toumanoff, who observes that, while *Hereti* (the normal Georgian form meaning ‘land of the Her’) lay between the rivers Alazani and Iori, *Her* was a different place, situated more than 200 miles south of Ḳakheti near Lake Urmia.[84]

Two further peoples claiming to be the true heirs to Albania will be considered below – the Lezgis of Daghestan and the Turkic settlers who made their new homeland south of the Araxes in Persian Azarbaijan (derived through Arabic ‘Adharbeijān’ and Middle Persian ‘Aturpātakān’ from the Greek ‘Atropatēnē’).[85]

The disappearance from history of the state of Albania left many questions unanswered – including its geographical extent. While its northern limits were fixed approximately by the Daghestan mountains and the river Samur, the open plains lying to the south contained no obvious barriers except the Kura and Araxes Rivers. Albania stretched as far south as the Kura, but it is unknown whether it occupied the whole of that approximate rectangle, or shared it with Shirvan.[86]

The Shirvan-shahs

According to one Azerbaijani historian, ‘Shirvan became inhabited by diverse peoples…moving in from the north through the Darband and Darial passes and from the south and east (via Iran). For several millennia…[it] was an arena of…contact between a succession of peoples speaking Caucasian, Iranian and Turkic languages, as we know from the evidence…of written records…archeology and place-names.'[87]

The presence of Caucasians and Iranians in Caucasian territory is quite obvious, but the inclusion here of Turkic peoples requires corroboration because of its twentieth-century political intention. So too does Ashurbeyli's citation from early Armenian historians of a motley collection of 'tribal' names occurring in the North Caucasus–Caspian region in early times, including Huns, Khazars, Leks, Kaspis, Sharvans, Bakans, Maskuts, Sabirs, etc., some of which are referred to as 'probably the autochthonous population of the country'.[88] Even if, as the author writes, Turkic Huns, Sabirs and Khazars did infiltrate Albania from as early as the second century AD this would not make them 'autochthonous', any more than the fifth-century Huns could be called natives of Rome. Such attempts by Azerbaijanian historians to establish various Turkic peoples as their ancestors and as aboriginal natives of the Caucasus, and not more recent incomers, will be a recurrent theme in our narrative.

The place-name Shirvan (or Sharwan) appears to have originated in Persia, although it also occurs elsewhere. The Persian writer Hamza al-Isfahani describes the Sasanid ceremony of inauguration of Jevanshir's nephew Varaz Trdat as ruler of Albania, in which Shah Khusrau Anushirvan's Darband district governors (or princes) wore embroidered robes, each bearing a different animal symbol. That of Jevanshir, the 'Shirvan-shah', had a lion, as he was the Lion Prince (in Persian 'shīr' means 'lion'). He and the Prince of Wild Boars (Vakhran-shah), the Prince of Elephants (Filanshah) and others were high-ranking officers responsible for holding the Darband pass against Turkic nomads infiltrating from the north.[89] The frontier shahs appointed by the Shah-an-Shah (‘King of Kings’) of Iran's Sasanid dynasty filled these posts from the third century AD to the beginning of the ninth (801), when Yazid, chief of the Arab Shayban clan, became governor of Shirvan, Darband and Azerbaijan. His son Khalid left three sons who all became governors of the north-western provinces. One of them, Haitham ibn Khalid, took advantage of another crisis in the caliphate in 861 to declare the independence of Shirvan, ousting the traditionally Persian régime and instituting an explicitly Arab and Islamic dynasty of Shirvan-shahs which lasted from the sixth century to the tenth. As everywhere else in the Islamic empire, the rulers abandoned native names, submerging their ethnic affiliation under the monotonous theocratic repertoire of Arabic names.

References to the Shirvan-shah state as one of the provinces of Albania are made by Armenian historians from the seventh century AD onward, but the extent of the respective territories occupied by the Albanians and Shirvanis, their relative locations, and relations between them remain enigmatic.[90]

The Khazars

The most formidable of the Turks in the Volga–Caucasus region were the Khazars, who were making their presence felt on the coast by the eighth century. Moreover, the invasion of the Caucasus from the south by the Islamic conquerors had already begun in the seventh century, and access by the Darband Gate to North Caucasus was also their aim. These incursions obviously had severe repercussions on the peoples of Albania and Shirvan.

For more than 400 years (c. AD 650 to the 1070s) the khanate of the Khazars dominated a large territory bounded by the north-west Caspian coast from the Volga delta to Darband, the Don and lower Volga, the Sea of Azov, and the foothills of North Caucasus and Daghestan. In some periods its realm extended 600 miles farther north to the Volga Bulgar state at the Kama confluence, and as far westward as Crimea, the middle Dnepr and Kiev.[91] This made Khazaria 'In geographical terms one of the largest political units of the [eighth-century world]…containing a multi-national…multi-religious population, holding under its sway…[numerous] vassal states and tribes, the Khazar Qaganate could, with full justification, style itself an empire.'[92] At the height of its power it controlled trade routes from the Caspian Sea to Crimea and Carpathians, exacting tribute from the resident populations and from caravans traversing the great Eurasian steppe. The Khazars attacked Albania persistently in their attempts to gain overland access to south-east Caucasia and the Middle East, but they could also reach these lands by other routes – contemporaries considered that the journey from Khazaria to Constantinople took twenty-eight days overland but only nine days by sea.[93] The coastal and river routes linking Khazaria with the Black Sea, long ago explored and exploited by the Greeks and Romans, were also used by the Khazars, whose maritime importance is demonstrated by the fact that in Arabic and Iranian to this day the Caspian is called the Khazar Sea (*Baḥr al-khazar*, *Bahr-e khazar*).[94]

Khazar power in the steppe was challenged over the years by Bulgars, Alans, Magyars, Pechenegs and Swedish Vikings, and was finally usurped by the Kypchaks. Many Khazars joined the Magyars in their westward advance, forming three of the ten tribes constituting the Hungarian people when they settled in the Danube plain in the ninth century.[95]

Like Caucasian Albania, the Khazar Khanate left relatively few traces and no identifiable successor, but its long existence left many enigmas. Unlike most nomadic Turkish peoples who passed across the great Asio-European steppe, the Khazars cannot be identified with any other members of the Turkic language family, although affinity with the old Bulgar and modern Chuvash group is often assumed.[96] The main reason why the Khazars remain a mystery is that no documents in their language survive, although several texts in Hebrew do exist, as do some seventy Khazar names, titles and place-names gathered from Greek, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Georgian and Hebrew sources.[97]

The Khazars emerged from the ever-changing nomadic groupings from Central Asia which European history knows as Huns, Avars, Sabirs and Turks, and their first incursions into the Caucasus probably occurred early in the sixth century.[98] So frequent did their raids on Albania become in the seventh century that the Lezgis of southern Daghestan changed their policy from alliance with the Khazars against the Arabs to alliance with the Arabs against the Khazars. Their numerous attacks on Darband, Albania and South Caucasus continued up to the 730s, and it was only after the town of Akhty/Shahbani had been under Khazar siege for more than ten years that the Khazars were defeated by the Daghestani emirs of Tarsa, Rutul, Ginukh and Rufak.[99] The use of Hebrew script for some of the recorded Khazar words arises from the fact that in 721 or 730, under Khagan Bulan, they forsook their Turkish cosmology and shamanist rites and adopted Judaism – only to switch to Islam about 737. These swings in policy were partly tactical: their conversion to Islam and submission to the caliph was forced upon them by an Arab punitive expedition led by Marwan, who drove their khagan from his base at Itil in the Volga delta and pursued them up-river. On the other hand, although the Khazars had frequently allied themselves with the Byzantine emperor, and Leo III (717–41) arranged the marriage of his son Constantine to the khagan's daughter Chichak, they do not seem to have been tempted to become Christian. Under Khagan Obadiah they returned to Judaism in 799 or 809.

A correspondence about the Khazars' rumoured 'Jewish state' developed in the tenth century when a Jewish official in Islamic Spain wrote to the Khazar king Joseph requesting information.[100] It appears that 'Judaism among the Khazars had but a restricted scope and concerned only the top of the social pyramid'.[101] Their final conversion to Judaism, indeed, seems half-hearted, since they did not observe the Sabbath. Particularly strange was the Khazars' institution of having two kings. One, the ceremonial *khagan*, possessed no political power and was mainly kept in seclusion, emerging only once every four months; he had scores of wives and concubines, but was obliged to 'choose' death at the age of 40. The other king conducted the affairs of government and war and was accountable only to himself. Only the two kings, their nobles and warlords professed Judaism, while the general population maintained traditional Turkic Animist beliefs, with blood sacrifices to the supreme god Tengri-Khan.[102] It seems improbable, therefore, that, as some writers have suggested, there would have been sufficient 'Jewish Khazars' from the Caucasus to make them a significant component in the very large Jewish population that lived in eastern and central Europe from the twelfth century onward.[103]

The final chapter in the history of the Khazars involves the invasion of north-east Caucasia from western Europe. Although such phrases as 'waves of fierce nomadic hordes from Asia' have been a stock theme in European, and particularly Russian, history, obviously aggression did not come exclusively from that direction. The Greeks under Philip and Alexander the Great of Macedon campaigned aggressively against the Persians in the fourth century BC, and this drive to the east was resumed by the Romans. Thereafter, Germanic expansion from northern Germany and Scandinavia brought the Goths as far south-east as the Black Sea in the third century AD, where they held part of the lower Dnepr and Danube, and held on to Crimea until the ninth century. From then the expansion of the Slavs in eastern Europe coincided with Scandinavian exploration from the north, and the domination of the East Slavs on the Dnepr by Swedish Vikings or Varangs resembled the Norsemen's trading and raiding along the west European seaboard. A source of much subsequent confusion was that the Swedes who followed the Dnepr and Volga river routes from the Baltic and emerged on the Black Sea and Caspian became known to the Greeks, the Arabs and the East Slavs as 'Rhōs' or 'Rus' (probably from a Swedish word for 'rowers'). As the Scandinavian raiders settled among the East Slavs (for whom the word 'rusyy' means only 'fair-haired') this apparently became accepted by them as their own name, *russkiy*. Conversely, the Norsemen in the Viking–Slav state on the Dnepr resembled their western kin who became the French-speaking Normans, by abandoning their Scandinavian speech and adopting the local Slavonic language.[104]

The Rus Vikings were well known to the Byzantines, in whose waters they appeared in the eighth century, attacking Constantinople in 200 ships, and they made the Dnepr basin – with its readily subjected Slav population and its plentiful foodstuffs and ship-timber – their base for further raids on the urbanized world of Asia Minor. Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (912–59) in his book on the administration of the empire recorded facts about the Slavs, consistently naming them in Greek as *Sklavoi*, and clearly differentiating them from the 'Rus', who were boat-men from the north, Swedish Vikings exacting tribute from 'the Slavonic regions' (vassal territories which he referred to as *Rosia*). So familiar did the Byzantine emperors become with the Rus Scandinavians that from the tenth century they hired them as mercenaries, such as the 6,000 warriors who formed the nucleus of Emperor Basil II's Varangian guard.[105]

Meanwhile the Dnepr Slavs were exploited as a source of tribute both by the Khazars and the Varangians. According to the Russian chronicles, one of the first Norse leaders who set himself up over the Dnepr Slavs as king[106] was Helgi – in Slavonic 'Oleg'. In the late ninth century he asserted his authority over the Dnepr Slavs and ordered them to stop paying tribute to the Khazars, thus establishing a Varangian tribute monopoly. Like his predecessors and successors, Helgi/Oleg raided Constantinople: about AD 907 he led a mixed force of Swedes and Slavs, and negotiated a treaty with the emperor on peace and trading conditions.[107] By this time the Vikings were also sailing on the Caspian Sea, where they encountered the Khazars. Tangible evidence of contacts between these two entrepreneurial peoples on the Eurasian waterways are the hoards of Arab silver coins (dirhams) which are found at various sites in Russia.[108] Between 909 and 913 a fleet of 'Rus' who had sailed by way of the Don and Volga to the Khazar capital Itil obtained the Khazar ruler's permission to sail south beyond Baku, where their army landed and made a three-day raid to Ardabil. In 943 a similar expedition, again commanded by Oleg, is said to have taken 500 ships to the river Kura and sailed upstream as far as Bardha^{c}a, which they looted and occupied for several months.[109] These expeditions were emulated by

Svyatoslav, who in 965 is said to have travelled to Khazaria and sacked Itil and Semender; turning west across North Caucasus, the Rus then raided the Alans and Circassians and destroyed the Khazar stronghold Sarkel on the Don. The Khazar empire never recovered from these blows, and was forced to accept conversion to Islam as the price of assistance from the Khwarazm-shah against attacks by the Oghuz Turks. In 1030–2 the Rus made their last raid on South Caucasus when, supported by Alans, they attacked Shirvan; fifty years later the defeat of the Khazars by another Rus called Oleg was their final mention in historical records.[110]

The Scando-Rus Vikings appear to have made several expeditions across the Black Sea to Colchis: a Georgian chronicler records that in the eleventh century, during the reign of Bagrat IV,

> Liparit [Baghvashi] again came from Greece with Demetre, King Bagrat's brother, and troops and funds given by the Emperor, and stirred up civil strife… Liparit gained the support of the Kakhs…and the Armenian King David…There were also 3,000 Varangians whom he deployed at Bashi…Bagrat appeared with an army from Inner Kartli…and captured Abusera and other nobles, [who] could not stand up to the Varangians, Liparit gave [the Varangians] their pay and food and…[they] passed over the Likhi mountains [out of Kartli].[111]

Twentieth-century Georgian historians interpreting this episode were forced by Russian ideological control to argue that these 'Varangians' were East Slavs, since recent Western research (which rather conclusively identifies the 'Rus' as Scandinavians) was banned in the USSR. This was because the Soviet Communist Party (KPSS) needed to legitimize Russia's conquest of South Caucasus by asserting that ‘The beginning of relations between Georgia and Russia go back into time immemorial.’[112]

Another episode in Russo-Scandinavian probing into the Caucasus is the association of Dnepr princes with Tmutorakan, a town on the Taman peninsula commanding the entry to the Azov Sea through the Kerch Strait – an obvious place for Vikings to use as a base. Under Khazar rule it was known as Tamatarkha, but after Svyatoslav's victory over the Khazars and their Alan and Circassian vassals in 965 it was annexed in the name of Grand Prince Vladimir I of Kiev, who in 988 appointed his son Mstislav as governor there. Mstislav, challenged by the gigantic Circassian prince Rededya to single combat by wrestling, succeeded in killing Rededya, ‘after which he…subjected the Circassians to tribute and, returning to Tmutorakan, he founded a Church’.[113] Thereafter Tmutorakan was used by various Kievan junior princes as a base in the squabbles between members of the ruling family.[114] In 1078 one of them attempted to reclaim Tmutorakan as his patrimony by allying himself with the Kypchak Turks (called ‘Polovtsians’ by the Rus). However, the Kypchaks soon ousted the Khazars and Pechenegs from the whole Volga–Dnepr steppe, thus depriving the Russians of their Tmutorakan outpost.[115]

Persia and the Caucasus

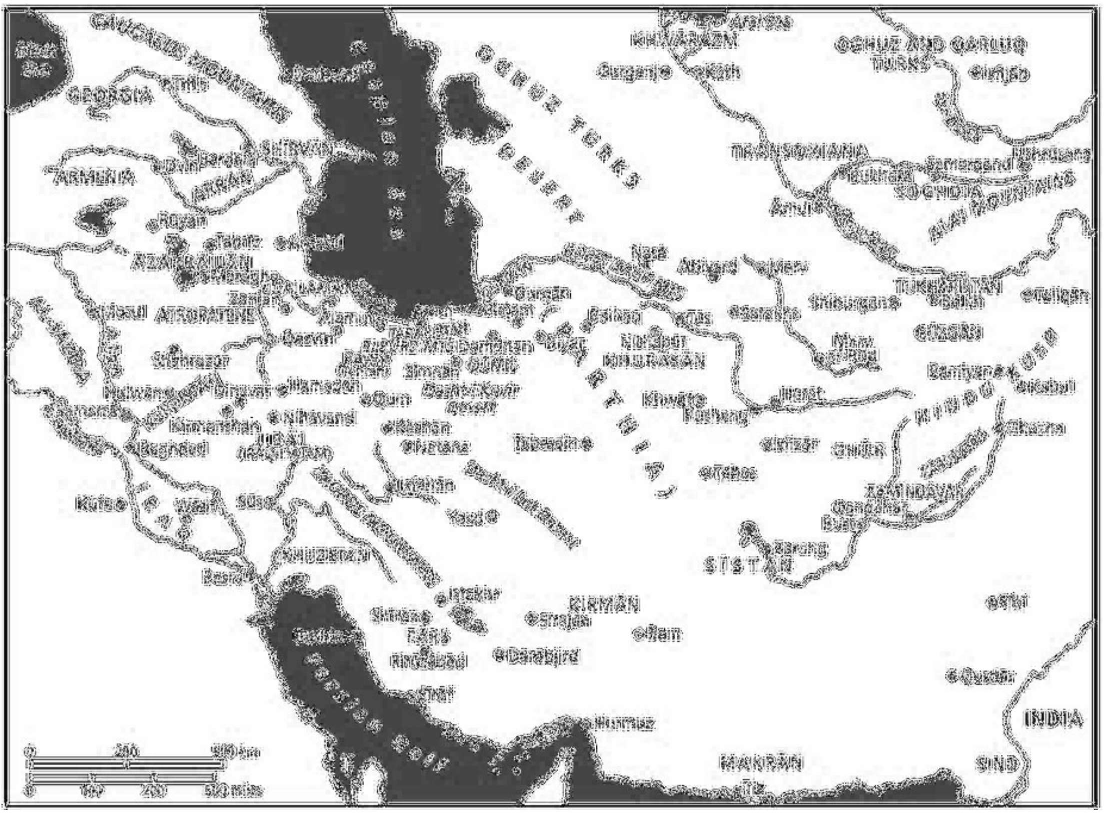
Developments in three of the South Caucasus states – Armenia, Georgia and Albania – before and after the Islamic conquest have been outlined in the foregoing sections. Tracing the origins of the fourth – Atropatene/Azerbaijan – requires some consideration of Persian history, particularly in relation to the Turkic peoples who became such an important factor in the history of the Near East as a whole, and Azerbaijan in particular.

In contrast with the episodic intrusions into the Caucasus by the 'Rus', the influence of the great neighbour immediately to the east, Iran, was of continuous significance for 2,000 years, even though Persia itself underwent partial eclipse between the seventh and sixteenth centuries. The Arab conquest of Persia began in AD 632 with Arab incursions from the Euphrates–Tigris plain; five years later the Arabs won a crucial battle at Qadisiya, and in 642 the last Sasanian shah, Yazdgard, was defeated decisively at Nihavand and was eventually assassinated in Marv in 651.[116] Arab occupation of Persia took the usual form, with the slaughter of defenders of towns who would not submit, systematic looting, and capture of prisoners of war and women and children to be sold as slaves, and the imposition of a 'treaty' by the Arab commander, specifying the amounts of taxes (*kharāj* and *jizya*) to be paid as tribute by those citizens who chose not to become Muslims but, as *dhimmi*s ('protected people'), to retain their own religion. This customary concession to Christians and Jews was later also extended (but not always guaranteed) to Zoroastrians. In Persia the category of native citizens who agreed to convert to Islam and work with the occupiers as 'helpers' (Arabic 'mawālī') was of particular importance, including not only artisans, but also many educated people. Many slaves as well 'gained their freedom' by converting to Islam.[117]

Although the 'natural frontier' between the Persian plateau and southern Iraq (Mesopotamia – the river plain of the Euphrates and Tigris – would seem to be the western slopes of the Zagros range, in the seventh century the Sasanian capital was the ancient city of Ctesiphon, standing on the Tigris, some 20 miles south-east of the future site of Baghdad. From there a road led up through the mountains to Kermanshah and Hamadan. It was presumably the Iraqi Arabs' reaction to the culturally unfamiliar surroundings in this neighbouring land which they had occupied that made them call it *Iraq al-ᶜajam*ī – 'Persian Iraq'.[118] This rather slighting name, which continued to be used for centuries, was perhaps related to the Muslims' contemptuous and intolerant treatment of Persian adherents of Zoroastrianism and other Iranian religions, which in the eighth century led to the emigration of many Parsees from Persia to India.[119]

Persia's profound and continuous influence in the Caucasus arose from several factors. For centuries it occupied a large part of the Caucasus and Caspian region (see Map 8), and it still possessed considerable military potential. Persia's economic importance too was always great, since, along with caravan routes to China crossing the northern plains beyond the Kopet Dagh mountains and the river Oxus/Amu Darya, it provided corridors linking India and China with the Mediterranean world, vital both for nomadic migrations and Oriental trade, while the Persian Gulf also offered a sea route to India. Another aspect of Persia's proximity to the great Eurasian steppes which remained highly significant was that its exposure to waves of Turkic peoples migrating to the Middle East, the Caucasus and eventually Europe had not only negative, but in some respects positive consequences.[120] Culturally, Persia was on a much higher level than the bedouin Arabs and, although Muslims condemn Persia's previous religion, Zoroastrianism, as polytheist, the Persians realized their own cultural superiority. This, however, did not save them from the Arab leaders' arrogance and unjustified contempt towards the *mawali*, because 'The Arabs saw their [own] function as war;

any other they regarded as beneath them, the mawālī being held in contempt for the very skills which made their presence desirable and useful.'[121] Moreover, it was primarily the Persians who 'rescued [Islam] from a narrow bedouin outlook and bedouin mores…[by showing] that Islam…need not be bound solely to the Arabic language and Arab norms of behaviour'.[122]


Black Sea
CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS
GEORGIA
Tiflis
Darband
Caspian Sea
GHUZZ TURKS
DESERT
SHIRVAN
ARMENIA
Dvin
Bardha'a
ARRAN
Tabriz
Ardabil
AZARBAIJAN
Maragha
Zanjan
Mosul
ATROPATENE
Qazvin
Gurgan
Shahrazur
Hulwan
Dinavar
Hamadan
Qum
Simnan
QUMIS
Nihavand
Kirmanshah
JIBAL
Baghdad
Kashan
Natanz
Tabasain
Kufa
Wasit
Susa
Isfahan
Yazd
Basra
KHUZISTAN
Istakhr
Shiraz
FARS
Firuzabad
Darabjird
Siraf
Persian Gulf
KIRMAN
Sirajan
Bam
Hurmuz
MAKRAN
Tiz
SIND
INDIA
Qusdar
SISTAN
Zarang
Bust
Qandahar
ZAMINDAVAR
Ghazna
Kabul
Bamiyan
HINDU KUSH
Herat
Fushanj
Khwaf
Tabas
GHUR
KHURASAN
Nishapur
Tus
Sarakhs
Marw
Abivard
Nasa
Shiburgan
Balkh
TUKHARISTAN
Talikan
TRANSOXIANA
Bukhara
Samarqand
SOGHDIA
Amul
KHWARAZM
Gurganj
Kath
Aral Sea
OGHUZ AND QARLUQ TURKS
Isfijab
0 200 400 km
0 100 200 300 miles

Map 8 Persia in the eighth century AD.

Persia's propensity for mystical speculation and philosophy was augmented in the Middle Ages by scientific observation and a rich literature in Persian and Arabic, and it continued to contribute new ideas, developing both orthodox and heretical Islamic doctrines.[123] It was therefore natural that Persia became the hotbed of the major schism in Islam – that of the Shi^{c}a (which, as it arose in Arabia from a quarrel over ᶜAli's successorship to Muhammad, smacks of a family vendetta rather than theological dispute). Subsequently many traditions and rituals accreted around ᶜAli and his son Husayn the Martyr – most visibly the festival of Ashura at the beginning of Muharram, the Muslim New Year, when in a kind of mystery play an emotional procession of men torment themselves, beating their chests with their fists or with stones, or holding knives to their shaven heads to produce bleeding wounds.[124] This public pageant was instituted by the Shiᶜi ruler of Dailam, Muizz ad-Daulah, in 962.[125] (In the world today Shiᶜites make up only 10% of all Muslims; and while Saudi Arabia has as few as 4% Shiᶜa, Iraq has 53%, and Iran over 80%.)[126]

By the tenth century Persia fell into three main areas differing in politics and religion. The centre – approximately from Hamadan to Shiraz, including Ray, Khuzistan and Fars – was under governors appointed by the caliph, and generally held orthodox Sunni beliefs. The south-east – from Dasht-i Lut desert south to Kerman and Sistan, and north to Khorasan, the Turkmen frontier and the Oxus plain – was ruled by Samanid emirs, and was also a stronghold of Sunni orthodoxy.[127] The north-west, comprising Azerbaijan and, huddled between the south Caspian coast and the Alburz mountains, several small, but densely populated principalities – Tarum, Gilan, Dailam, Ruyan, Gurgan and Tabaristan (the name Dailam, or later Mazandaran, often being applied to the whole region). As the climate and vegetation here were generally insalubrious for strangers, and most Persians could not understand the local dialects, these south Caspian lands for long remained inaccessible to the Arabs, so that Zoroastrianism held out longer than elsewhere, and rebels and heretical minorities often found refuge here. From the 680s the rulers of these tribal and independent Caspian provinces, who strongly favoured the Shi^{c}ism of ^{c}Ali's Zaydi descendants and the social and political egalitarianism of the Kharijite movement, were constantly in rebellion against the caliphs.[128]

A particularly influential sect emerged in Mecca about AD 765, when Jafar aṣ-Ṣadiq was recognized by the Shi^{c}a as the ‘sixth imam’, embodying ^{c}Ali's spiritual authority. As Jafar rejected political power, the succession became contentious. Most Shi^{c}ites, believing that there would be a series of imams until the appearance of the twelfth and final ‘Mahdi’, formed the ‘Twelve-Imam’ Shi^{c}ites (‘Twelvers’). Among those who rejected this view the most influential were followers of Isma^{c}il, who in the late ninth century formed a secret organization owing allegiance to the ‘hidden imam, Muhammad ibn Isma^{c}il’, whose resurrection would end history. As Isma^{c}ilism reflected pre-Islamic Persian beliefs, it developed particularly deep roots in Dailam.[129] Shi^{c}a's élite, ‘divinely guided’ imams explained the Koran to ‘the ordinary unthinking Muslim’; Isma^{c}ilism was ‘organized hierarchically and secretly’, its initiates being ‘forbidden under oath to reveal anything about [its] teachings or membership’.[130]

By AD 867 practically all of the south Caspian lands adhered to Shi^{c}ism, but divisions soon occurred: the conflicting opinions propagated led to such fanatical antagonism between their respective supporters that Dailam, Gilan and Tabaristan became embroiled in warfare, which brought a rather sinister development – the building of Alamut castle as a remote mountainous stronghold of the Dailamite Justan clan.[131] Isma^{c}ilism also spread to North Africa and Egypt, where it became the official doctrine of the

Fatimid[132] caliphate created in AD 969. In 1094 a coup d'état by the Cairo army chief led to a schism among the Isma^cilis, with Ḥasan aṣ-Ṣabbaḥ leading the Persian faction.[133] By then a rebellion was afoot against the Seljuq Turks who dominated Persia and, since aṣ-Ṣabbaḥ had taken over Alamut castle, this became the headquarters of the anti-Seljuq movement and of the Isma^cili sect, whose castles established control over many parts of Persia.[134] Aṣ-Ṣabbah's secret terrorist organization of volunteers trained to commit carefully planned assassinations of Seljuq political figures by infiltrating their households. The exploits of these 'Assassins' were suicide missions, in an ostensibly sacred cause: 'if they were killed in action they would be rewarded as martyrs in Paradise…according to the general Muslim doctrine'.[135]

Persia's language and literature were also affected by the Arab conquest, but the Persians were far from being passive recipients. On the contrary, they gradually 'Iranized…the urbanized Arabs'.[136] Throughout the period of Arab domination, 'Persian clearly never ceased to be spoken generally, and…to some extent to be written, even for official purposes'.[137] By the early ninth century 'Cultivated Persians…used Arabic as their literary medium and Persian for ordinary conversation', but even in the literature written in Arabic 'the rôle of Persians…could hardly be over-emphasized'.[138] In a major work on Persian history the last chapter is entitled 'The Persian conquest of Islam',[139] because, although the Persians were 'nominally conquered and absorbed by the Arabs', nevertheless 'their cultural distinctiveness, stability, independence of outlook, their patience and their subtlety…enabled them to work, like a catalyst, *from within* the new [Arabic] culture'. In the new

Persian literature which emerged in the tenth century, great writers such as Firdausi, Nizami, Sa^{c}di, ^{c}Omar Khayyam, Hafiz and Rumi expressed their own 'apartness, with its concomitant feeling of superiority'.[140]

Persian Islam and separatism

Politically, Persia after the seventh century was not a separate state but a submerged component of the Islamic empire. However, its inherent cultural vitality enabled national awareness to survive while successive emirates and sultanates on its territory came and went, until Persian statehood reasserted itself under the Safavid dynasty in the early sixteenth century.

Persia's warrior class became some of the main victims of Arab persecution because of their Zoroastrian religion and the courage and devotion with which they had defended their country against the invaders. Even after the fighting was over, treatment of those Persian soldiers who submitted as *mawali* was so arrogant under the Umayyad caliphs that early in the eighth century many found life insufferable and emigrated to India, where they formed the community known as Parsees.[141] After the Arab subjugators' zeal subsided somewhat they allowed the Persians to form a provincial army, for which the Persians themselves provided most of the men.[142] A mutiny which occurred on the death of Caliph al-Mahdi (775–85) marked '[the] first entry of the central [Islamic] army into politics without the leadership of a pretender to the caliphate'. Caliph Harun ar-Rashid (786–809) was installed in Baghdad through the mediation of the influential Persian Barmak family of Khorasan.[143] On Harun's death the division of the caliphate, including Persia, among his three sons caused further conflict, during which the army, led by the Khorasanian general Ṭahir ibn al-Husayn, was instrumental in restoring caliphal authority in Baghdad.[144] Harun was typical of his generation of ^{c}Abbasid caliphs, who felt incapable of ruling ‘without the help of [non-Arab] administrators who had been trained in problems of government’. These men, of Turkmen origin, made freedmen by conversion to Islam, usually served the caliph with great personal loyalty as chamberlains, secretaries, army commanders and soldiers of the palace guard.[145]

Relations between Persians and Arabs were also important. Arabia was a near neighbour, and Arabian nomads had been migrating into parts of Persia since early times; but many more came to settle after the Islamic conquest.[146] The Persian notable General Ṭahir made himself indispensible to the caliphs by becoming responsible for collecting tribute on their behalf. He hailed from Khorasan, which had been one of Iran's most backward regions, but Ṭahirids’ ‘firm and just rule’ brought material and cultural progress, and for a century (c. AD 750–833) ‘Khurasani troops formed the backbone of the Abbasid army and the mainstay of the dynasty.’ Thus the family gained extraordinary status, which continued through several generations during the ninth century. Ṭahir himself in 821 became governor of all caliphate lands east of Iraq, and several of its members were appointed as provincial governors.[147]

The Ṭahirids were also connected with the reorganization of the Persian army. Having witnessed the anarchy following the death of Harun ar-Rashid, his son al-Mu^{c}tasim decided that it was essential for a claimant to the throne to have a palace guard of ethnically alien troops. When he became caliph in 833, therefore, al-Mu^{c}tasim instituted a new method for recruitment of his army: instead of Arabs or Persians, it would consist mainly of Turkish slaves from the tribal areas in the Oxus steppes, known as ‘youths’ (Arabic ‘ghulām’, plural ‘ghilmān’). These slave warriors, bound by an oath of loyalty to the caliph, were eligible for manumission and appointment to responsible offices in the state in reward for faithful service. Thus al-Mu^{c}tasim possessed his own contingents of up to 60,000 Turkish troops. His admiration for Turks as soldiers was such that they became an élite, isolated from the general population and forbidden to marry non-Turkic women.[148] Al-Mu^{c}tasim introduced his reform because after ar-Rashid's death ‘the ^{c}Abbasids [had] found themselves [so] dependent on the Khurasanians…that the caliphate…lost all prestige in the eyes of the Arabs…Al-Mu^{c}tasim's Turkish slave army…was not a personal whim but a pressing necessity…[T]he most successful alternative to the Khurasanians was the Turks; and if the Turks for a while chose and deposed caliphs as they wished, the ultimate revival of the ^{c}Abbasid empire at the end of the…ninth century was militarily a Turkish accomplishment.’[149]

As hereditary governors of Khorasan, the Ṭahirids were also involved in the affairs of the Samanid emirs, their neighbours to the north in Transoxania, where Ṭahir ibn ^{c}Abdullah had reconnoitred deep into the Oghuz Turks’ pasture-lands. Bukhara became the local administrative centre where Turkish *ghulam*s were gathered and trained – a trade which ‘contributed both to the economic prosperity of Transoxania and Khurasan and to the great personal wealth of the Ṭahirids’. Slaves formed much of the tribute regularly exacted on behalf of Baghdad from neighbouring lands such as Afghanistan and Farghana. The system of slave retainers, however, could bring trouble. Mutawakkil on his accession as caliph in 847 received 200 Turkish slaves as gifts, but his court was already dominated by the Turkish palace guard, who had appointed him, and it was their officers too who assassinated him, replacing him on the throne with his son al-Muntasir – whose brief reign marked the beginning of a period of anarchy in Baghdad, during which caliphs were changed by the Turkish generals with ‘alarming frequency’.[150]

Another sign of decline in the caliphate's central authority in Persia was the emergence of separate emirates. In addition to that of the Samanids, there were the Saffarids to the south-east of the Caspian, including Khorasan, Sistan and part of Afghanistan (867); the Sajids in Azerbaijan (879); and three others. South of the Caspian the small states of Gurgan, Tabaristan, Gilan and Dailam, which asserted their Shi^{c}ism, remained independent until they were gathered, along with Baghdad, Hamadan and Isfahan, into the large conglomerate Dailamite Emirate of the Buyid (Arabic ‘Buwayhid’) family which usurped the ^{c}Abbasid caliphate as the political authority over the whole of western Persia and Iraq from 945 to 1055.[151]

The Buyids’ homeland was in the mountains north of Qazvin, where the peasants did not possess horses, but were renowned for their endurance and courage fighting on foot. This had made them valuable mercenaries in campaigns against Georgia; and in Azerbaijan too they assisted the Sallarid prince al-Marzuban ibn Muhammad in expelling Kurdish squatters during the 930s and subsequently in his campaigns of conquest in former Albania and part of Armenia. Apart from Dailamite foot-soldiers, the Buyid rulers needed cavalry, for which they hired Turkish troops, who excelled as mounted archers. These bodies of mercenaries, however, generated conflicts between the Turkish Sunnis and the Dailami Shiᶜites.[152]

Iran's fate for the next hundred years depended upon events in this south Caspian coastal region,[153] as ‘[the] confusion at the centre of the government made it impossible for the ᶜAbbāsids to maintain their control’. The city of Ray, for instance – ‘the gateway to central Iran’ from the Caucasus – changed hands repeatedly during the early tenth century. Anarchy prevailed, and it was ostensibly to liberate the caliph from interference by Turkish generals that in 945 ᶜAli ibn Buya, the senior of three Dailamite brothers, sent the youngest, ᶜAhmad, to occupy Baghdad, depose the incumbent caliph and install the first of a series of puppet caliphs.[154] Thus began the domination of Sunni Iraq by the Shiᶜa military régime of the unsophisticated Buyids, until their successors were civilized by Iran's more cultured aristocracy. To proclaim their power, the Buyids adopted a new style of Arabic titles incorporating the word ‘daulat’, ‘power, state or empire’. The founder of the dynasty, ᶜAli ibn Buya, became ‘Imad ad-Daulat’; the second brother, Hasan, ‘Rukn ad-Daulat’; and ᶜAhmad, ‘Muᶜizz ad-Daulat’ – each meaning something like ‘pillar of the state/empire’.[155]

In fact, the Buyids, as a Shiᶜite minority in Iraq, were at a disadvantage, as they were surrounded by Turkish soldiers who, although at this stage relatively few in numbers, ‘formed an élite class as military leaders and governors’, so that the Buyid dictators ‘were virtually powerless to command obedience from anyone’.[156] Internal division in Persia also prevented the state from challenging the threat posed by a Byzantine invasion of Syria.[157]

Surprisingly, amid all the disorder, Rukn ad-Daula conceived the idea of restoring the Persian monarchy, beginning by making his father's tomb in Shiraz – now the capital city – the Buyid dynasty's mausoleum. A history of the Buyids compiled for his son Adhud invented a spurious link with the Sasanid royal house, and a silver medal was minted, depicting the crowned ruler as ‘King-of-Kings’.[158] As the centre of Islamic power had now shifted to Egypt, while eastern Arabia, Khorasan and parts of Iraq were in the hands of a Shiᶜite revolutionary sect, there was no central caliphal authority capable of suppressing these manifestations of Iranian separatism. ᶜAdhud ad-Daula's dynastic project was a fantasy; after his death another protracted succession struggle occurred; and finally, in the middle of the eleventh century, one of the pretenders precipitated the end of the Buyid Emirate by requesting aid from the Seljuq Turks, who obliged by seizing Isfahan, Baghdad and Shiraz.[159]

[1] A. Zarrīnkūb, ‘The Arab conquest of Iran and its aftermath’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, edited by R. N. Frye, *Cambridge*, 1975, p. 17.

[2] L. V. Vaglieri, ‘The patriarchal and Umayyad caliphates’, in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, 2 vols., vol. I, *The Central Islamic Lands*, edited by P. M. Holt, A. K. S. Lambton and B. Lewis, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 67–72, 80–2.

[3] C. Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, London, 1991, pp. 141–3, 381–2.

[4] ‘During ^{c}Umar's caliphate, the Arabs were prohibited from owning land in order to be, instead, a permanent fighting force carrying Islam to the ends of the Earth’: Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, p. 408.

[5] Examples of this are A. Guillaume's *Islam*, Harmondsworth, 1954, and the articles on ‘Islam’ and ‘The Islamic world’ in the fifteenth edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

[6] W. Muir, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline, and Fall, from Original Sources*, 2nd edn, revised, with maps, London, 1892, pp. 8, 14–19, 22, 25–7, 33–9, 43–4, 60–2, 72, 211, 384. This work is based entirely on authoritative Arab sources, such as aṭ-Ṭabari and Ibn al-Athir. A similarly objective account by a recent historian is Vaglieri, ‘Patriarchal and Umayyad’.

[7] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. IV, p. 176; E. W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, Written in Egypt during the Years 1833–1835*, reprinted from 3rd edn, 1842, London, 1890, pp. 96–7; Muir, *Caliphate*, pp. 16–17, 32, 42.

[8] P. A. A. Hoodbhoy, ‘Islamic failure’, *Prospect*, no. 71, February 2002, p. 10.

[9] S. Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov (VI–XVI vv.)*, Baku, 1983, pp. 46–7; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 126–7; Mahomedov, *Obrazovaniye khazarskogo kaganata*, pp. 47–52.

[10] A. N. Ṭer -Ghevondyan, *Armenia i Arabskiy Khalifat*, Yerevan, 1977, p. 35, cited in L. Kh. Ter-Mkrtichyan, *Armyanskiye istochniki o Sredney Azii VIII–XVIII vv.*, Moscow, 1985, p. 7.

[11] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 119, 121; *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part 1, p. 781; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, pp. 635, 636; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 109–10; Vaglieri, ‘Patriarchal and Umayyad’, pp. 59 (map), 62–3.

[12] Koran, 2:189–90, 4:116, 9:1–5, in the Penguin edition translated by N. J. Dawood, Harmondsworth, 1974, pp. 320–1, 351–2, 378.

[13] Guillaume, Islam, pp. 184–5; Koran, 9:5, p. 321; Berdzenishvili, Istoriya Gruzii, vol. I, p. 119; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 172–3; Ṭer-Mkrtichyan, *Armyanskiye istochniki*, p. 6.

[14] Ṭer-Mkrtichyan, *Armyanskiye istochniki*, pp. 7–8.

[15] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 120–1; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p.110; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 339–43; D. Sourdel, ‘^{c}Abbasid caliphate’ in *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, pp. 138–9; Vaglieri, ‘Patriarchal and Umayyad’, p. 64.

[16] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, pp. 635–8; vol. V, pp. 487–9; *Istoriya Dagestana*, edited by G. D. Daniyalov, *et al.*, 3 vols., Moscow, 1967–8, vol. I, p. 156; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 176–8.

[17] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 119–20; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 173–4; Suny, *Making*, pp. 27–8; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 388–9.

[18] G. A. Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya – Lezgistan*, St Petersburg, 1995, p. 98; *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part 1, p. 786; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 110; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, p. 175; Suny, *Making*, p. 28. Here too there are problems with dates, e.g. as Marwan was born in AD 692/AH 73, in 698 he would only have been 6 years old; or, according to a different reported year of birth, AD 695–6/AH 76, only 2 or 3. Similarly, his age at death is quoted as either 58 or 69. In general, discrepancies exist between dates given in Arab and Armenian sources: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 636; vol. VI, pp. 623–4.

[19] ^{c}Abu Muhammad ^{c}Ahmad ibn A^{c}sam al-Kufi, *Kitāb al-futukh: Kniga zavoyevaniy* (*izvlecheniya po istorii Azerbaydzhana VII–IX vv.*), translated from Arabic by Z. M. Buniyatov, Baku, 1981, pp. 13–14.

[20] Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, p. 603.

[21] *Ibid*., pp. 605–6.

[22] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 110.

[23] Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 606, 781, 786.

[24] Ter-Mkrtichyan, *Armyanskiye istochniki*, p. 7.

[25] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, p. 120; D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, London, 1971, p. 71; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 174–5, 177.

[26] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, p. 122.

[27] *Ibid*., p. 121; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. X, p. 623; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 127–8; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 177–8, 225; Suny, *Making*, p. 28; Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', p. 607.

[28] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, p. 123; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 111.

[29] C. E. Bosworth, 'The historical background of Islamic civilization', in Savory, ed., Introduction to Islamic Civilization, p. 20.

[30] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 110–12.

[31] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 81; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 112; Suny, *Making*, pp. 28–9; Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 453.

[32] *Istoriya khalifov Vardapeta Gevonda, pisatelya VIII veka*, translated from Armenian [by K. Patkanyan], St Petersburg, 1862, p. 112, cited by Ter-Mkrtichyan, *Armyanskiye istochniki*, p. 8.

[33] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 66; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 112–14; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*,

vol. II, pp. 343–8; Suny, *Making*, p. 30; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, p. 611.

[34] A. Baramidze, Sh. Radiani and B. Zhgenti, *Istoriya gruzinskoy literatury: kratkiy ocherk*, Tbilisi, 1958, pp. 15–16.

[35] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 123–4; Suny, *Making*, pp. 28–9; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 409–10, 412–66.

[36] Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 454.

[37] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 36–7; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 102 n. 58, 132, 183–7, 445, 449.

[38] Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 77–8, n. 86.

[39] Suny, *Making*, p. 29; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 608–9, 781–2. Suny calls the empire-builder ‘Adarnase I’, but Toumanoff's ‘Adarnase III’ is supported by his reasoned investigation into the ‘genealogical imbroglio’ presented by the confusing extant sources, especially Sumbat's *History of the Bagratids* – ‘a most valuable document’ although the part of it ‘which treats of the period antecedent to Ashot the Great is replete with glaring errors’ – later interpolations serving the nationalist cause of tracing the direct descent of the Georgian kings back to the Old Testament King David: see Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 201–2, 254, 345–7, 397–9, 402–3, 421–2, 528.

[40] Allen's consistent reference to him as ‘Ashot (the) Kuropalatês (of Tao)’, pp. 81, 306, 398, is borne out by Toumanoff's ‘Ashot I the Great’ of Iberia Bagrationi (Bagratuni), Curopalate, for the Emperor and the Caliph,

813–30: 'Armenia and Georgia', pp. 610, 782: Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 203, table facing p. 416.

[41] The Bagratids' power depended largely on the gold and other mines they possessed in the Chorokhi valley: Allen, *History*, p. 57; Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 324 n. 81.

[42] Allen, *History*, pp. 57, 81–2; Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', p. 609.

[43] Suny, *Making*, pp. 29–30; Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', p. 782.

[44] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 124.

[45] Allen, *History*, p. 82.

[46] Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', pp. 610, 782.

[47] *Ibid*., p. 613.

[48] *Ibid*., pp. 614–15.

[49] Bryusov, Letopis, p. 124; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 126–7; Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', pp. 610–20; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 202–3.

[50] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 140.

[51] Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', pp. 610–20, 782–3.

[52] A. Grigoryan and N. Stepanyan, *Yerevan, Garni, Gegard, Garni, Echmiadzin, Ashtarak*, Moscow, 1985, pp. 162–71; Harutyunyan, *Kamennaya letopis*, pp. 80–1; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 141–3.

[53] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 138–41.

[54] Strabo, *Geography*, vol. V, pp. 225–7.

[55] Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, p. 4.

[56] *Atlas SSSR*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 120, 195; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Azerbaydzhan*, pp. 122–39.

[57] Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, pp. 3–8; see also n. 76.

[58] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 16, 24, 26, 66, 68–9, 80; Didebulidze, 'Iz istorii srednevekovoy kultury', pp. 106–8; Mahomedov, Obrazovaniye, pp. 166, 172; Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, pp. xv–xvi, 2–3, 5–9, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 54, 56–8, 62, 66, 69; Strabo, *Geography*, vol. V, pp. 187, 223, map XI; A. S. Sumbatzade, Azerbaydzhantsy, pp. 60–3.

[59] The fifth-century catholicos of Armenia, Abraham, wrote that 'The see of Albania was established before that of Armenia', and this is confirmed by the thirteenth-century Armenian scholar Stepanos Orbelian: 'the first bishop in Albania was consecrated by St Gregory, Illuminator of Armenia, at the request of Urnayr, king of Albania…they remained submissive to the incumbents of the Armenian see for 440 years, and…the catholicoi of Albania accepted

consecration at the hands of the Armenians, for those of the Armenians were patriarchs, and those of the Albanians, archbishops' (Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, pp. xv–xvi, 174).

[60] The Diphysite doctrine and its propagators – 'the filthy Nestorius…[and] the evil and vain Council of Chalcedon…which impudently…attribute[d] two natures and two persons to the one Christ God' – were cursed by the Armenian church as accomplices of 'the deceptive Antichrist', and Armenians and Albanians were forbidden to have any contact whatever with those heretics, including all Georgians: Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, pp. 72–5, 173–4, 196; no doubt similar sentiments were expressed on the other side.

[61] It might be as appropriate to label Canada or New England (or indeed Egypt or India) as 'Britain'.

[62] See K. V. Trever, *Ocherki po istorii i kulture Kavkazskoy Albanii: IV v. do n.e.–VII v.n.e.*, Moscow, 1959, p. 42, Map of Transcaucasia and neighbouring countries in the fifth to seventh centuries. Published by the USSR Academy of Sciences's Institute of the History of Material Culture, this remained the authoritative, and only, Soviet book (in Russian) about Albania for three decades, although it contradicted the officially 'correct' version of the origins of Azerbaijan.

[63] M. Androniḳashvili, narḳvevebi iranul-kartuli enobrivi urtiertobidan, vol. II,part 1, [summary in English] p. 262.

[64] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 26 and maps on pp. 16, 24, 66, 80.

[65] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 61.

[66] Hübschmann, 'Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen'.

[67] Y. Yaraliyev, ['O deshifrovke pismennosti Kavkazskoy Albanii'], *Alpan*, 1993, nos. 5 and 6, Russian translation reprinted from *Nash Dagestan* in Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 29–57. See also H. Kurdian, 'The newly discovered alphabet of the Caucasian Albanians', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1956, pp. 80–3.

[68] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 51, 59–63, 67–8, 70–3, 80–2, 136–7; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 168–71; Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, pp. xviii, 92–3, 96, 103, 109, 143 n., 229; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 19, 219, 223, 257–9, 474–84, maps.

[69] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 9–10, 82–94.

[70] *Ibid*., pp. 97–8; W. Madelung, 'The minor dynasties of northern Iran' in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 226–7.

[71] Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, says 'king of the Huns', but recent Armenian research suggests that 'Alans' is more probable, since medieval Armenian historians frequently confused *Aghvank/Aluank* 'Albania' with 'Alan', but also used 'Huns' (Honk^{c}) as a general name for steppe people from the north: Gabrielyan, *Armyano-alanskiye otnosheniya*, pp. 5–6, 39–44.

[72] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 97–8; Dawtak Kertoł, *Voghek i mahn Jeunshiri metsi ishkhanin*, with preface by L. Mkrtchian text in Old Armenian (Grabar) and modern Armenian, and translations into Russian, English, French, German, Spanish and Polish], Yerevan, 1986, p. 184; Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, p. 241; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 126.

[73] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 98–100; Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, p. 123; Madelung, 'Minor dynasties', p. 227.

[74] Allen, *History*, pp. 65–6; B. S. Amoretti, 'Sects and heresies', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 489–92, 499–500, 503–9; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, pp. 660, 1041; V. Minorsky, 'Sahl ibn Sunbāt of Shakkī and Arrān. The Caucasian vassals of Marzubān in 334/955', in Minorsky, *The Turks, Iran and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages*, London, 1978, pp. 505–10; R. Mottahedeh, 'The ᶜAbbasid caliphate in Iran', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 64, 75; Zarrīnkūb, 'Arab conquest', pp. 32–3.

[75] Trever, *Ocherki*, pp. 45–7.

[76] The total number of Udins registered in the USSR in 1979 was 6,900, by 1989 increasing to 8,849: USSR, Gosudarstrennyy Komitet SSSR po Stȧtistike, *Itogi Vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1989g.*, part 2, *Natsionalnyy sostav naseleniya*, Moscow, 1989 (hereafter Census 1989, Moscow), p. 4; *Narody mira: istoriko-etnograficheskiy spravochnik*, edited by Yu. V. Bromley *et al.*, Moscow, 1988, p. 464. See also Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 68–9, 95, 174.

[77] The spelling varies because in classical Armenian there were two [l] sounds, so that in contradistinction to the soft l in e.g. ‘Dilizhan’, the first consonant letter in ‘Albania’ was the ‘dark l’ represented by the letter ł in Polish – *Ałvank* – but in modern Armenian it normally became the voiced velar fricative gh [IPA ɣ resembling the uvular r in French] – *Aghvank*: R. W. Thomson, *Introduction to Classical Armenian*, Delmar, 1975, pp. 2, 4.

[78] See the English translation: Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*; when it was written is unclear: see *Ibid*., p. xx.

[79] Davtaḳ Kertogh, *Vogheḳ i mahn jeunshiri*, pp. 133–5, 185, 187–91.

[80] I. P. Petrushevskiy, *Ocherki po istorii feodalnykh otnosheniy v Azerbaydzhane i Armenii v XVI–nachale XIX v.*, Leningrad, 1949, p. 52, cited (but giving the title in Azerbaijani) by A. L. Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule*, Stanford, 1992, p. 234 n. 36.

[81] For instance, Valeriy Bryusov wrote in 1916:

> After the death of [King] Gagik I [in 1020] the Armenian kingdoms quickly declined…Armenia was still divided into several independent states. Apart from the…important kingdom of the Bagratids, the other large kingdom was that of the Artsrunis…Then there were the kingdom of the princes of Syunik, the Vanand kingdom…the Albanian kingdom…founded by one of Ashot III's sons, Gurgen, and others. (Bryusov, *Letopis*, p. 99.)

[82] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 42.

[83] *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 69, 255, 269, 393, in which the map of ‘Georgia in the fifth century’ on p. 396 shows Hereti as a large region entirely to the north of the Alazani, extending almost to Shaki in the south-east and far beyond the mountains into valleys in Daghestan occupied by Avars, Laks and Lezgis (see *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 124, 284). Georgians have also asserted, confusingly, that Hereti was identical with the Albania of Armenian and Byzantine sources, and with the ‘Kingdom of Shaki’ of Arab sources, including ‘those provinces of south-west Daghestan which for several centuries had been part of the Kartli state’: *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 258, 269–71, 273–4, 277–9, 393, 406.

[84] Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 103 n. 159, 160, 161, 219, 227, 305 n. 119, 386 n. 11, 476 n. 168, maps [1], [2], [3].

[85] M. Vasmer, *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3 vols., Heidelberg, 1953–8, vol. I, p. 6. The name Adharbaijan, first used in Arabic sources in the ninth century, was applied by various authors to different regions: A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 120–4.

[86] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, map p. 190; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 59, 68 n. 65, 82–3, 85, 219, 257–9, 392, 475–83; Trever, *Ocherki*, map p. 42.

[87] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, p. 18.

[88] Autochthon(ic): ‘sprung from the soil which they inhabit; the earliest known dwellers in any country…aborigines…

indigenous', *Oxford English Dictionary*; 'The native, original population of country', S. I. Ozhegov, *Slovar russkogo yazyka*.

[89] Similarly, the name of the prince of Albania, Jevanshir, denotes 'young lion': Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 13, 45–6, 300; Movses Daskhurantsi, *History*, pp. 55, 107–9, 149.

[90] Trever, *Ocherki*, pp. 29–31.

[91] Cf. McEvedy, *Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, pp. 33–61.

[92] P. B. Golden, *Khazar Studies: an Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, Budapest, 1980, vol. I, p. 15.

[93] N. Golb and O. Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century*, Ithaca (USA), 1982, pp. 120–1.

[94] *Al-atlas ul-ᶜarabī*, revised and enlarged edn, Beirut, 1401/1981, pp. 49, 51, 54. The Caspian is also called 'Bahr al-Qazwīn'. See also *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 931.

[95] Z. Halász, *A Short History of Hungary*, Budapest, 1975, pp. 10–11; Koestler, *Thirteenth Tribe*, pp. 85–93.

[96] *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. II, *Tyurkskiye yazyki*, p. 15.

[97] Golden, *Khazar Studies*, pp. 6–8, 21, 112–23.

[98] S. A. Pletnyova, *Khazary*, 2nd, augmented edn, Moscow, 1986, pp. 14–18, 76.

[99] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 100.

[100] D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton, 1954, pp. 89–91, 114–15, 116, 120–1, 125–70, 170, etc.; Golb and Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents*; Koestler, *Thirteenth Tribe*, pp. 57–69.

[101] Minorsky, ‘A new book on the Khazars’, in Minorsky, *Turks, Iran and the Caucasus*, [pp. 42–67].

[102] Dunlop, *History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 81–4, 104, 108–15, 170, 195; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, pp. 63–7, 97–102; Koestler, *Thirteenth Tribe*, p. 14; Pletnyova, *Khazary*, pp. 31–3, 77.

[103] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 16 vols., Jerusalem, 1972, vol. X, cols. 952–3; Koestler, *Thirteenth Tribe*, pp. 15–16, 125–40, etc.

[104] In the field of Scandinavian studies it has long been held that Slavonic *rus* and Greek ᶜρως meant Swedish seafarers. For Rus as an ethnonym not of Slavonic but of Scandinavian origin, and the controversy between ‘Normanists’ who accept this view of the founders of the first East Slav (later ‘Russian’) state, and the ‘anti-Normanists’ who champion the Russian nationalist view, see S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200*, London, 1996, pp. 27–50; E. V. Gordon, *An Introduction to Old Norse*, 2nd edn, Oxford, 1957, pp. xxii, 264; D. Obolensky, ‘The empire and its

northern neighbours, 565–1018', in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part 1, pp. 494–6.

[105] M. Canard, 'Byzantium and the Muslim world to the middle of the eleventh century', in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, Part 1, p. 731; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, [vol. I], Greek text edited by Gy. Moravcsik, English translation by R. J. H. Jenkins, Budapest, 1949, pp. 51, 57–61, 63; Obolensky, 'The empire', pp. 492, 494–5, 516.

[106] Scandinavian *kuningas* was the origin of the East Slavonic word *knyaz* 'prince'.

[107] Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 57–8, 77–8, 106–7, 117–18; *Die Nestor-Chronik*, with introduction and commentary by D. Chyzhevzkyy, Wiesbaden, 1969, pp. 19–21, 23, 29–31, 43–52; Obolensky, 'The empire', p. 495.

[108] Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 11–12, 14–15, 17–19, 59–61, 128–30.

[109] H. R. E. Davidson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium*, London, 1976, pp. 26, 53–66, 126; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 58, 115–17, 147–8; Madelung, 'Minor dynasties', pp. 233–4, 241, 246, 248 (here, as in many other accounts, the raiders are mistakenly called 'Russians', not Scandinavians or Rus); al-Mas^{c}udī, *Murũj adh-Dhahab*, cited by Dunlop, *History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 187, 204, 208–12, 238–9; Pletnyova, *Khazary*, pp. 67–8, 77–8.

[110] Dunlop, *History of the Jewish Khazars*, pp. 241–3, 247–50; *Nestor-Chronik*, p. 63; Pletnyova, *Khazary*, pp. 71–3.

[111] *Letopis Kartli* (*maṭiane kartlisi*) (the Kartli Chronicle, 8th–11th centuries AD), Russian translation, introduction and notes by G. V. Tsulaya, Tbilisi, 1982, pp. 69, 97.

[112] See, for instance R. V. Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy vneshney politiki Gruzii v Sredniye Veka (XII vek)*, Tbilisi, 1995, pp. 4–5; Z. V. Papaskiri, '"Varangi" gruzinskoy "Letopisi Kartli" i nekotorye voprosy russko-gruzinskikh kontaktov v XI veke', *Istoriya SSSR*, 1981, no. 3, pp. 164–72.

[113] *Nestor-Chronik*, pp. 118, 143. Cf. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 200–1.

[114] *Nestor-Chronik*, pp. 159–60. Cf. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, p. 269.

[115] Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 260, 266–7, 271–3; *Nestor-Chronik*, pp. 193–4, 247–8.

[116] Zarrīnkūb, 'Arab conquest', pp. 2–4, 9–19, 23–5.

[117] *Ibid*., pp. 29–32.

[118] Significantly, in Arabic the adjective *ajamī* means 'non-Arab', 'alien', 'barbarian' or 'Persian'.

[119] Zarrīnkūb, 'Arab conquest', pp. 31–2.

[120] Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, pp. 7–10.

[121] Zarrīnkūb, 'Arab conquest', pp. 29, 32–4, 40, 42.

[122] R. N. Frye, 'Preface', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, p. xi.

[123] E. S. Kennedy, 'The exact sciences', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 378–9; J. De Menasce, 'Zoroastrian literature after the Muslim conquest', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 543–4, 566–7; S. H. Nasr, 'Life sciences, alchemy and medicine', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 396–9; Nasr, 'Philosophy and cosmology', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 419–21, 442–6, 464–6; Nasr and M. Mutahharī, 'The religious sciences', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 481–2. Cf. 'The Iranian ever-open door to innovations and heresies of all kinds': G. M. Wickens, 'Khātimah', in Savory, ed., *Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, p. 188.

[124] *Islam: kratkiy spravochnik*, edited by Ye. M. Primakov, *et al.*, Moscow, 1983, p. 103, *Taazié* E. Reclus, *The Earth and Its Inhabitants*, London, 1876–94, *Asia*, vol. I, *Asiatic Russia*, pp. 119–20; vol. IV, *South-western Asia*, p. 115. Such a procession was seen on BBC News broadcasts from Iraq on 1 March 2004.

[125] C. Cahen, 'Buwayhids or Buyids', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 1352; Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 52, 364–70.

[126] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Macropaedia*, vol. XIII, p. 835; vol. XXI, p. 976; Halliday, *Iran*, p. 18. Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, p. 191, gives the population of Iran as 43 million, of whom 98% are Muslims, with Shi^{c}ite 'Twelvers' constituting 92% and Sunnis 8%.

[127] R. N. Frye, ‘The Samanids’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 136–8, 141, 153.

[128] Amoretti, ‘Sects and heresies’, pp. 487–9, 509–10; C. E. Bosworth, ‘The Ṭahirids and Ṣaffārids’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 99–100, 102; H. Busse, ‘Iran under the Būyids,’ in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 253–60; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 198–226; Mottahedeh, ‘ᶜAbbasid caliphate’, p. 59; Zarrīnkūb, ‘Arab conquest’, pp. 35–53.

[129] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. IV, pp. 198–9; Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 194–7.

[130] M. G. S. Hodgson, ‘The Ismāᶜīlī state’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, edited by J. A. Boyle, Cambridge, 1968, pp. 424–6.

[131] *Ibid*., pp. 430–1, 437–9; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 206–12, 223–4.

[132] So called after one of Muhammad's daughters, Fatimah who, the Egyptian Ismaᶜilis claimed, was married to ᶜAli: Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, p. 123.

[133] H. Corbin, ‘Nāsir-i Khusrau and Iranian Ismāᶜīlism’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 520–30; Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 53–5, 196–7; Hodgson, ‘Ismāᶜīlī state’, pp. 423, 426–8; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 206, 208–10.

[134] Hodgson, ‘Ismāᶜīlī state’, pp. 429–33; Nasr, ‘Philosophy and cosmology’, pp. 439–41.

[135] Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, p. 197; Hodgson, ‘Ismāᶜīlī state’, pp. 440–3, 453–5.

[136] V. Danner, ‘Arabic literature in Iran’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 582, 591.

[137] G. M. Wickens, ‘Persian literature: an affirmation of identity’, in Savory, ed., *Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, p. 71.

[138] Danner, ‘Arabic literature in Iran’, pp. 566, 582, 594.

[139] Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, pp. 234–55.

[140] Wickens, ‘Persian literature’, pp. 71–7.

[141] Zarrīnkūb, ‘Arab conquest’, pp. 28–32.

[142] Bosworth, ‘Tahirids and Saffarids’, p. 91.

[143] Often known in English as the ‘Barmecides’.

[144] Mottahedeh, ‘ᶜAbbasid caliphate’, pp. 67–73; Sourdel, ‘ᶜAbbasid caliphate’, pp. 118–19.

[145] Sourdel, ‘ᶜAbbasid caliphate’, p. 116.

146 Mottahedeh, 'ᶜAbbasid caliphate', pp. 58–62; Zarrīnkūb, 'Arab conquest', pp. 1–3, 27.

147 Bosworth, 'Ṭahirids and Ṣaffarids', pp. 90–1.

148 *Ibid*., p. 91; Mottahedeh, 'ᶜAbbasid caliphate', pp. 74–8; Sourdel, 'ᶜAbbasid caliphate', pp. 125–8.

149 Mottahedeh, 'ᶜAbbasid caliphate', pp. 86–8.

150 Bosworth, 'Ṭahirids and Ṣaffarids', pp. 95–9, 137, 149–51; Frye, 'Samanids', pp. 137, 149–51; Mottahedeh, 'ᶜAbbasid caliphate', p. 76; Sourdel, 'ᶜAbbasid caliphate', pp. 127–39.

151 Bosworth, 'Ṭahirids and Ṣaffarids', pp. 99–102, 106–8, 117–18, 121, 124–30; Busse, 'Iran under the Būyids', pp. 250–64, 271–9, 292–304; Madelung, 'Minor dynasties', pp. 198–222, 228–32; R. Spuler, 'The disintegration of the caliphate in the East', in *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, p. 143.

152 C. E. Bosworth, 'The early Ghaznavids', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, p. 163; Bosworth, 'Ṭahirids and Ṣaffarids', p. 103; Busse, 'Iran under the Būyids', pp. 251–2, 291; Madelung, 'Minor dynasties', pp. 232–3; Mottahedeh, 'ᶜAbbasid caliphate', p. 84.

153 Busse, 'Iran under the Būyids', p. 250.

[154] Busse, 'Iran under the Būyids', pp. 257–8; Canard, 'Byzantium and the Muslim world', p. 703; B. Lewis, 'Government, society and economic life under the Abbasids and Fatimids', in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part 1, p. 646; Mottahedeh, '^{c}Abbasid caliphate', pp. 83–4.

[155] Cahen, 'Buwayhids or Buyids', pp. 1350–1, 1353–4.

[156] Bosworth, 'Early Ghaznavids', p. 163; C. E. Bosworth, 'The political and dynastic history of the Iranian world (AD 1000–1217)', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, pp. 46–7; Busse, 'Iran under the Būyids', pp. 265–6, 301; Cahen, 'Buwayhids or Buyids', p. 1355; C. Cahen, 'Tribes, cities and social organization', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, part 1, pp. 311–12.

[157] Busse, 'Iran under the Būyids', pp. 262–5, 269–70.

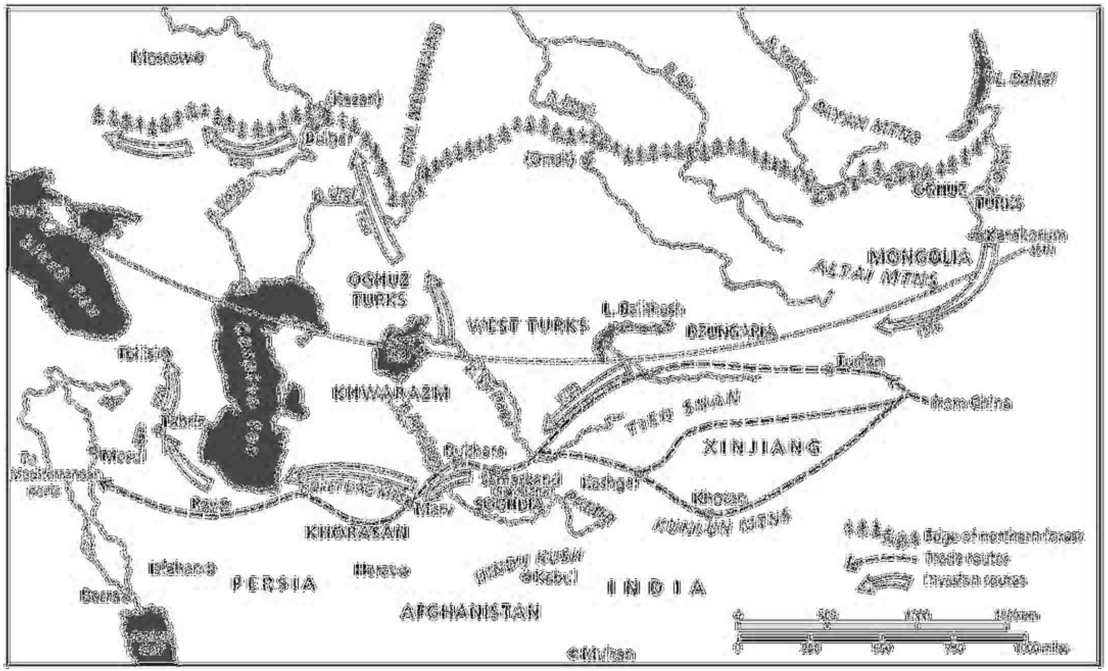
[158] *Ibid*., pp. 260, 271, 273–4.

[159] *Ibid*., pp. 291, 296–304; Cahen, 'Buwayhids or Buyids', p. 1350.

3 The Caucasus, Persia, Turkestan, Azerbaijan, Europe, the tenth to twelfth centuries

Inner-Asian migration and trade routes

From early times waves of migrating peoples advanced towards Persia from the Mongolian plateau, where movement to the south was blocked by China, but migration ways lay open westwards across the vast plateaux and plains of Inner Asia, offering grazing for horses and other livestock. These steppes, however, were enclosed between high mountain ranges to north and south, which converged westwards until progress was obstructed by the towering barrier of the Tian Shan and Pamir. Here migrants from the east seeking new pastures or more temperate climes – mainly speakers of languages related to Turkish – had to follow the arduous passes from Kashgar to the Farghana valley, whence they could ride south-west through Soghdia and Marv, and so to Persia, where the 'Silk Road' led on to Syria and the Mediterranean.[1] However, as access on Persia's north-east frontier was barred until the seventh century AD by the Sasanian kings, Turkic migrants mainly skirted round the north of the Tian Shan and through the Dzungarian gap toward Lake Balkhash, in what is now Kazakstan.[2] It was this northerly route to the Aral Sea and north Caspian which brought the Avars, Huns, Khazars and Bulgars to the Volga and North Caucasus steppes, and sometimes to Europe.[3] From the sixth century AD a Turkic khanate existed east of the Aral Sea, and Persia's northern borders beyond the Amu Darya were the plains celebrated in Persian epic poetry as ‘Turan’, which attracted incursions by Turkic-speaking nomads (see Map 9).[4]


Moscow
(Kazan)
Bulgar
Tbilisi
Tabriz
Mosul
To Mediterranean ports
Rayy
OGHUZ TURKS
WEST TURKS
KHWARAZM
Bukhara
Samarkand
SOGHDIA
Marv
KHORASAN
Isfahan
PERSIA
Herat
AFGHANISTAN
Basra
HINDU KUSH
Kabul
INDIA
Multan
Kashgar
Khotan
KUNLUN MTNS
XINJIANG
TIEN SHAN
Turfan
from China
L. Balkhash
DZUNGARIA
(Omsk)
MONGOLIA
ALTAI MTNS
Karakorum
OGHUZ TURKS
L. Baikal
Edge of northern forest
Trade routes
Invasion routes
0
500
1000
1500km
0
250
500
750
1000miles

Map 9 Eurasian invasion and trade routes in the eighth–thirteenth centuries AD.

As most of the invaders of the Caucasus throughout historical times were speakers of languages related to Turkish, and the Caucasus became one of the main theatres for their development from nomadism into states, they demand considerable attention in this book. The names of Turkic tribes, e.g. Kypchak, Uzbek, Kalmak, Kyrghyz, etc., persist over centuries, but seem kaleidoscopic because they crop up sporadically as components of different confederations. Thus, according to a Nogay historian, ‘Not one of the peoples of Central Asia…can be traced back to any single nationality or group of tribes which lived in the great Eurasian grasslands in earlier times. During their formative periods each of these peoples…absorbed the most varied ethnic and racial elements.'[5] The same tribal names, such as Nogay, Kypchak or Turkmen, occur within various large nations – so that 'The ethnic composition of… the Uzbek khanate and the Nogay confederation (*ulus*) was essentially identical, [as] they included Turkic-speaking tribes roaming in these areas (Kypchaks, Karluks, Kangly, etc.) as well as Mongol tribes which had assimilated to the local population (Mangyt, Merkit, Tangut, etc.).'[6]

In English 'Turk' and 'Turkish' refer to a citizen of Turkey (the former Ottoman Empire) while other related peoples go by their specific names, such as Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks or Kazaks. In Turkish a Turk is called *türk* and the country *Türkiye*, but the word *türk* is also used for anyone speaking a language related to Turkish or for related cultures in general. To distinguish between these meanings in English the adjective 'Turkic' is widely used for the language family, which includes Uzbek, Tatar, Kazak, Chuvash, Turkish, etc., and for the whole group of peoples. In this book the adjective 'Turkish' will also be used for the Seljuq[7] tribes, who moved into Asia Minor and founded the Ottoman Empire. The name 'Turkmen' (from Persian 'turkumān' 'similar to a Turk') was often used for any of the tent-dwelling peoples, riding on horses and camels, and herding sheep and goats, and it remains a useful general term (although politically it now applies only to natives of Turkmenistan). Another linguistic complication arose because the Turkic tribes who invaded Russia in Chingiz Khan's armies became known in Russia and Europe as Tatars (*Tatarlar*) – corrupted in English as 'Tartars'. Indeed, all Turkic peoples were referred to by the Russians, often disparagingly, as 'Tatars'. In the Caucasus they applied the name 'Tatars' to Azerbaijanis, Kumuks and Nogays, and even to people who were not related to the Turks at all, but spoke the quite different Circassian or other Caucasian languages.

Oghuz, Ghaznavid and Seljuq Turks

From the seventh century AD many Persians in Khorasan came into contact with Turkic peoples from Transoxania ‘beyond the Oxus/Amu Darya’ – the steppe region named in Arabic ‘māwarāᶜannahr’ ‘what lies beyond the river’ – when they were recruiting mercenaries for the northern frontier. Persia's colonization of the steppes under the Ṭahirid and Samanid emirates in the ninth–tenth centuries attracted Turkmens from the large tribal confederation called the Oghuz, who occupied the steppes between Lake Balkhash and the Urals.[8] The Oghuz coveted Persian Soghdia, where the waters of the Zarafshan, flowing down from the Alay mountains, feed oases scattered between Samarkand and Bukhara. These abundant waters, distributed by irrigation canals, created fertile regions producing cereals, fruit and cotton. Another well-watered province, Khwarazm, lay to the north-west on the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, with irrigated cultivation along the left bank and the Aral Sea delta. Khwarazm had been part of Iran intermittently from at least the sixth century BC, and included several cities, including Khiva and Urgench. A third fertile region with many towns lay north-east of Samarkand on the upper Syr Darya and the Farghana.[9]

Oghuz migrated for centuries into these lands ‘beyond the river’ which the Persians considered to be their territory, and relations between the nomads and the towns varied. In the eighth century AD Saman established a new dynasty, and his great-grandson Ismaᶜil became the caliph's governor of the Samanid emirate, with Bukhara as his capital. His realm embraced all Transoxania, and he annexed the central Persian province of Khorasan.[10] From 875 the Samanids maintained forces in the northern steppes to prevent mass migration of Turks into the civilized province of Transoxania, when necessary making expeditions into the steppe, as in 893 when emir Isma^{c}il sacked a Karluk settlement and returned with ‘an immense booty of slaves and beasts’. Indeed, the Samanids’ economic prosperity was built on slave procurement from the steppe: ‘the demand for Turkish slaves was insatiable…[as they] were prized above all other races for their bravery, hardihood and equestrian skill’. Many Turkish *ghulam*s (slaves) became soldiers in Persia, and while ‘[n]umerically…[they] did not [represent] a great influx…they formed an élite class as military leaders and governors’. On the other hand, at times of weakness in Persia's central government, ‘these Turkish commanders had the means for power immediately at hand – personal entourages of slave soldiers, and territorial possessions to provide financial backing’. Consequently, as the Samanids’ control over their empire weakened later in the tenth century, ‘Uncertainties over the [Persian] succession allowed the Turkish military leaders and prominent bureaucrats…to act as king-makers’: in Bukhara and other vassal territories power was seized by Turks through ‘palace revolutions and succession *putschs*’.[11] The Samanids, by initiating the conversion of the Turkmens to Islam, had encouraged a force which now threatened their own existence, and when they asked the imams for support in combating them, they learned that, as the Turks too were ‘good Muslims’, it would be illicit to attack them. Thus, early in the eleventh century the Samanid emirate collapsed under the Turkish giant it had created. Moreover, as the beliefs passed on to the Oghuz by the Samanids were not those of Persia's dominant Shi^{c}ah faction, but orthodox Sunni, strife between the two branches increased in Persia, and the subsequent expansion of the Turkmens caused the eventual predominance of Sunnism throughout Eurasian Islam.[12]

As Samanid power declined, there occurred in Persia ‘the first major breakthrough of Turkish power…against the indigenous dynasties’,[13] when the emirate's Turkmen commander-in-chief, Alp-Tegin, fled from Bukhara after an unsuccessful coup d’état in 961, and established himself in Persia's far east at Ghazna in Afghanistan. His protégé Sebuk Tegin, a Turkish *ghulam*, was installed as the Samanid governor there, and a spurious dynastic link with the Sasanian emperors was invented to boost his authority.[14] Sebük and his son Maḥmud helped the Samanid emir Nuḥ II to expel Karakhanid Turks who had occupied Bukhara, and were rewarded by Maḥmud's appointment as commander-in-chief of the Khorasan army. By 997 Mahmud was in control of most of central Persia, and soon, having prevailed over all his rivals, became ‘one of the great figures of Islamic history’, and reigned as the sultan of Persia for the next thirty-two years.[15] Maḥmud's enormous professional army – including 54,000 cavalry and 1,300 elephants, kept perpetually on a war footing, ‘answerable only to the sultan, and look[ing] to him for successful leadership and a resultant flow of plunder’ – dominated the state. The élite of military *ghulam*s included Kurds, Afghans and Indians, but were mainly Turks, and all spoke Tajik – the ‘New Persian’ or Dari (‘parsī-i darī’, ‘Persian of the Court’) which had become the common spoken language throughout Persia.[16]

Within Persia Maḥmud's main campaigns were directed at gaining control of Khwarazm with its agricultural lands, its caravansarais serving the Oghuz trade routes, and its strategic situation in relation to the other cities of Central Asia and Iran and to the Turkmen pastures. In 1015 Maḥmud incorporated Khwarazm into his empire, under a former *ghulam* general as governor, so that it was transformed from an ethnically and culturally Iranian land into a Turkish one.[17]

Sultan Mahmud's later years were an orgy of warfare on several fronts: Transoxania in the north and Shiᶜite Dailam and Azerbaijan in the west. In the east he led eighteen expeditions against the Multan and Rajastan states of north India, where his fanatical ‘holy warriors’ (*ghāzī*s) sacked many Hindu temples. Justifying these raids in Koranic terms of intolerance towards pagans, Maḥmud's hordes pillaged and slaughtered, ruthlessly annihilating the Hindushahi dynasty, whose treasures were stolen to swell the coffers of Ghazna, and tens of thousands of slaves were brought to the caliphate.[18] Thus with Sultan Maḥmud the Central Asian Turks added to their pantheon a zealous warrior and scourge of the pagans, whose name would go with future generations of Persian Turkish despots and raiders as they devastated the Christian countries of the Caucasus and Anatolia. From time to time in future centuries they would again turn eastward for more pillaging of north-western India. There in the twelfth century the independent sultanate of Delhi was founded, and eventually, in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, most of India was subjected to the rule of the post-Mongol Chaghatay Turkish Moghul dynasty.

Another feature of Maḥmud's Islamic fervour was his rabid Sunni orthodoxy, which he demonstrated by a violent assault on the Caspian Shiᶜa communities in Persia itself, starting in Ray with the widow of its Kurdish emir (known as ‘the Sayyida’) who had assumed power on behalf of her sons. Other Buyid rulers in western Persia were accused of not protecting Hajj pilgrims passing through their realm. The sultan also knew that Adhud ad-Daula's Buyid successors in Baghdad, Shiraz, Kirman and Basra were patrons of literature and scholarship which encouraged awareness of the Iranian national heritage and the Iranization of Islamic culture,[19] but he refrained from attacking them until 1028, when the

Sayyida died and Maḥmud responded to her son's appeal for assistance by deposing him and sacking Ray ferociously to ‘cleanse’ western Persia of infidel Shiᶜites and ‘evil-doing innovators’, who were hunted down and their ‘heretical books’ burned. Maḥmud also sent his son Masᶜud to impose Sunni doctrine by force in Azerbaijan, Hamadan and Isfahan, but this was abandoned when Maḥmud died in 1030. Ghaznavid domination of south Caspia ended in 1035, but it had offended the Dailamite rulers so strongly that when the Seljuq invasion of Persia began they offered little opposition.[20]

Maḥmud's huge realm did not remain intact for long after 1030, but its symbolic importance was great: ‘the might of Mahmud's empire at its zenith immensely impressed succeeding generations…and especially excited the admiration of those who held fast to Sunni orthodoxy and revered the ᶜAbbāsid caliphs…Mahmud achieved his reputation as the great *ghāzī* sultan and hammer of the infidel Hindus’, and his campaign against the Shiᶜites in western Persia was seen as a *jihad* for ‘the re-establishment of Sunnī orthodoxy’.[21]

Meanwhile Persia was threatened by a new Turkmen invasion which was to have profound effects on the whole Middle East and Caucasus. As one of Maḥmud's chief enemies, the Karakhanid ᶜAli-Tegin and his Oghuz ally Arslan Israᶜil ibn Seljuq, had invaded and occupied Bukhara and Samarkand, Maḥmud in 1025 evicted ᶜAli-Tegin from Bukhara and sent Arslan Israᶜil to prison in India. Nevertheless, when 4,000 of Arslan Israᶜil's Turkmen warriors asked permission to settle as auxiliaries on Khorasan's northern frontier, Maḥmud granted their request. Thus a large body of Oghuz led by three sons of Arslan Isra^{c}il ibn Seljuq – probably displaced by increased pressure in the north by an influx of tribes from eastern Turkestan and Mongolia – moved south to take service with the Samanids and Karakhanids. By the time they reached the outskirts of Persia they were in a desperate condition. Although the Seljuq leaders of these Turkmens were somewhat assimilated to Perso-Arabic culture, having been converted to Sunni Islam about AD 992, most of their followers remained ordinary, undisciplined tribal Turkmens whose sole aim was plunder.[22] '[T]hese lawless…nomads could not be expected to have any regard for agriculture and settled life', because they were 'unfamiliar with the concepts of defined frontiers and…landed property', and their undisciplined bands caused such trouble to the local inhabitants that eventually 'large Ghaznavid armies were almost continually in the field against the Türkmen'.[23] The hatred which these Seljuq Turkmens felt toward the Ghaznavids was intensified when Maḥmud's successor Mas^{c}ud captured fifty of their leaders near Ray and had them trampled to death by elephants. Thereafter many Oghuz fugitives assembled in large contingents, some to move south and enlist as mercenaries with the rulers of Kirman and Isfahan, while others went west to Tabriz to enter the service of the Rawwadid emir of Azerbaijan, fighting against his Christian neighbours in Armenia and Georgia and the Shaddadid Kurdish chief al-Fadhl of Ganja.[24]

Despite the apparent invincibility of the Ghaznavid sultan's formidable army, the 'poorly armed, half-starved' Seljuq Turkmens possessed some advantages: they were used to privations, and their light weapons and hardy steppe horses made them quicker and more mobile than the Ghaznavids. Their swift approach and surprise attacks struck terror into the settled population of Persian towns and forced them to surrender. As the Seljuqs undermined normal economic life and law and order, in many areas the Persian rulers too, despairing of relief by the sultan, sued for peace. The decisive encounter occurred in 1040, when in the steppe near Dandanqan 16,000 Turkmen horsemen routed Sultan Mas^cud's army, and the Seljuq leaders took possession of Marv, Nishapur, Balkh and other cities of northern Iran.[25]

Thereafter western Persia became the Great Seljuq empire, ruled from its capital in Ray by a succession of Turkish sultans: Toghryl Beg (1038–63), Alp Arslan (1063–72), and Malik-Shah (1072–92).[26] The title ‘sultan’ had previously meant ‘authority’ or ‘ruler’, but Toghryl, adopting the title ‘exalted sultan’, used it to assert his supreme political sovereignty over all Islam, rivalling that of the caliph.[27] However, after Malik-Shah's death, for twenty-six years the succession to the sultanate was continually in dispute, often by several claimants. Malik-Shah's son Sanjar (1118–53) ruled for thirty-nine years, but his reign ended with defeat and imprisonment by Oghuz tribesmen. This was practically the end of Seljuq supremacy in eastern Persia, although the dynasty survived until its extinction by the Mongols in the thirteenth century.[28] Meanwhile the Turkish Khwarazm-shahs had been building up their power in Khorasan and threatening the ^cAbbasid caliph in Baghdad, so that by the end of the twelfth century the shahs of Khwarazm were the greatest power in eastern Islam.[29]

The Seljuq Turks, who had invaded Persia as marauders, readily evolved into Persian despots, ruling over a long-settled land where ‘the inevitable disputes between agriculturalists and nomads were decided more and more in favour of the [former]…and the nomads had either to conform to a settled existence or suffer in the country they had conquered'.[30] However, the contrast between urban Persians and nomadic Turks may not have been as clear as might be assumed. Transoxania 'was not only familiar with Turks as mercenaries, slaves and traders, but also as local settlers and landowners'. The Persian region of Isfijab, north of the Syr Darya, had developed as a typical colonial outpost on the edge of the desert to keep out the Oghuz and Kypchak nomads, but during long periods without war it had also become a populous centre of oasis cultivation and trade with the steppe people. The Turkmens themselves had established towns on their own Syr Darya frontier, making it 'profoundly Turkish', and now acted as intermediaries between Persia and the northern forest peoples.[31]

Their subsequent expansion over so much of the Middle East followed from their conversion to Islam, which harmonized well with what have been described as Turkish qualities – being 'warlike, provident, firm, and just'.[32] They also developed zeal for *jihad* and the role of *ghazi*s (fanatical warriors for the faith) and the Islamic cult of the sword. According to a twelfth-century story, in Mecca a voice from the Ka^{c}bah had declared that 'In the lands of the Arabs, Persians, Byzantines and Rus the sword is in the hands of the Turks, and fear of the sword is firmly implanted in all hearts', and as long as this remained so the Muslim faith would never perish.[33]

Because of the Seljuqs' illiteracy their sultans at first needed Persian viziers to instruct them in government.[34] The most famous of these was the Khorasanian aristocrat Nizam al-Mulk, who tutored Alp-Arslan and Malik-Shah in efficient state administration, and in general introduced the Seljuqs to

Persian culture.[35] By the eleventh century the caliphate had degenerated to a merely symbolic office, while the temporal power of the sultan had become almost unlimited, but now ‘the caliph's position as head of the Islamic community was reaffirmed, while the sultanate became an essential element in Islamic government’.[36] Under the influence of such men as Nizam al-Mulk and ^{c}Abu Hamid al-Ghazali’ (1058–1111) state institutions matured, altering the picture of Seljuq rulers as untutored warriors. Under their leadership the Turks conquered not only Persia, but also Asia Minor and eventually Roman Constantinople itself, and ‘[m]any Seljuq institutions lasted in their outward forms…until the twentieth century.’[37] Another new principle developed in Seljuq Persia was that the unity of religious belief (*din*) and state power (*daulat*), so that the Seljuqs fostered a conformist Sunni state, rigidly set against dissent and imagination, with its authority directed fiercely against the Shi^{c}ites. This doctrine was imposed in Persia after many years of Shi^{c}ah supremacy,[38] because Nizam al-Mulk perceived the increasing strength of the heretical Isma^{c}ilites as a special threat.[39]

The Isma^{c}ilis had flourished in Egypt since the establishment in 969 of the Fatimid dynasty with its Shi^{c}ite belief in a new line of caliphs who were supposedly the ‘true imams’ descended from ^{c}Ali. (The régime was also known as ‘Mamluk’[40] because the sultan's guard, who strongly influenced state politics, were entirely of slave origin.) This opened the way to realizing the utopian dream of ‘high Islamic ideals of equality and godliness among the faithful and an equitable order throughout mankind’. The secret Isma^{c}ili terrorist movement also persisted in Persia, targeting on the one hand the Seljuqs, whose militarist rule they hated and viewed as the devil's work, while on the other hand the Shīᶜites hated ‘the pettiness and aridity of the personal outlook sometimes encouraged by [the]…*sharīᶜa*-minded Islam’ inculcated in the Ismaᶜili Sunni schools. In 1090 an insurrection broke out in the Caspian coastal region around Alamut and the central highlands of Kuhistan, which came under Ismaᶜili control for several years, and an assassination campaign culminated in 1092 in the killing of vizier Nizam al-Mulk. Meanwhile civil strife was increased by Sunni massacres of Ismaᶜilis and retaliation by the Ismaᶜilis, who eventually shifted the base of their operations to Khwarazm.[41]

After Malik-Shah's death, succession to the Seljuq Sultanate was constantly disputed, and only one significant ruler, Sanjar, occupied the throne. Thereafter Persia disintegrated into a number of independent states, including that of the Ildegüzids of Azerbaijan.[42] The largest of these emirates, Khwarazm, under Anush-Tegin (a Turkish *ghulam* appointed by Malik-Shah) usurped Persia's place as the principal force in Central Asia. His son, ᶜAla’ ad-Din Atsyz (c. 1127–56), with the support of the Khorasan Oghuz and the Karakhitays, further consolidated the Khwarazm-shah dynasty's power, until in 1194 his grandson, ᶜAla’ ad-Din Tekish, put an end to the Seljuq dynasty, and was confirmed by the caliph as shah of all Iran and Turkestan.[43]

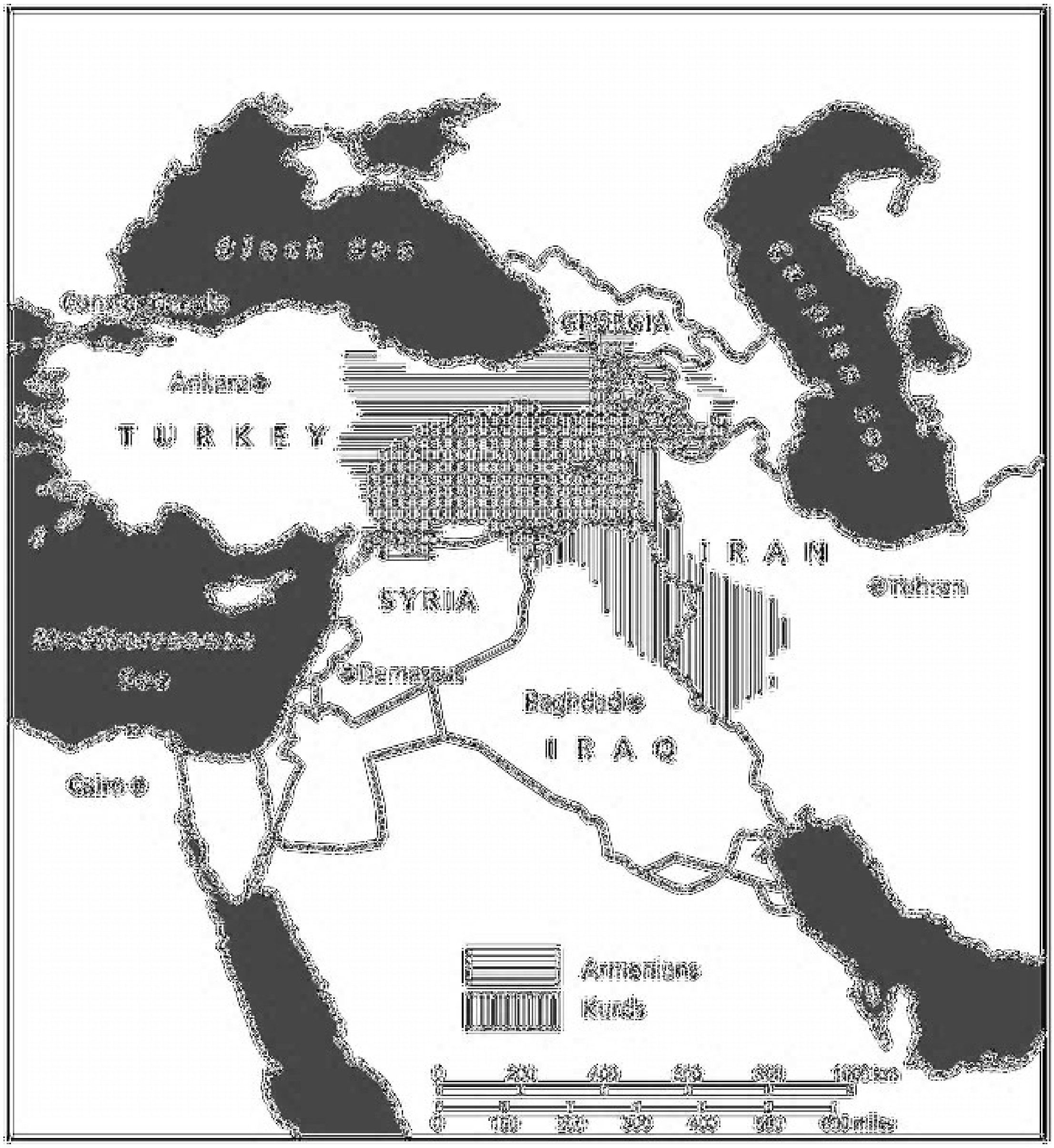
Kurdistan

One territory in South Caucasus which had always gone its own way with little regard for shah or caliph lay along the south-western edge of historical Armenia and Azerbaijan, amid the rugged heights commanding access to routes between the plains of Mesopotamia and the Caucasian–Iranian plateau. This was the homeland of two peoples speaking Iranian languages – the Kurds and the Lurs.[44] The Kurds' ancestors may have been the Kardukhi people who attacked the Greek expedition's retreat from Persia in 401 BC, related in Xenophon's *Anabasis*.[45] The Kurds themselves believe they are descended from the Medes, as the marching song of twentieth-century Kurdish guerrillas declares, 'We are the sons of Medes and Kay Kusraow / Our God is Kurdistan.'[46] The Kurds played a conspicuous part in the history of the Caucasus, always preserving their ethnic distinctiveness, although never forming a state. Like most communities in Persia at the time of the Arab conquest they were Zoroastrians, and did not immediately convert to Islam. Their first contact with the invaders came in AD 637, when Kurds in Mosul were forced to submit, and despite their staunch opposition other Kurdish communities were subdued by Caliph ᶜUmar in 643–5. In the general collapse of Persia's Sasanian kingdom many Kurds bowed to the inevitable, but others maintained sporadic resistance into the ninth century. Since then the Kurds of Iran and Mesopotamia have professed mainly Sunni Islam. Others retained the beliefs of the Yazidis with their echoes of Manicheism and Ismaᶜilism.[47] Today, while it is said that 'The daily life of the Kurds is permeated with Islam', they nevertheless stand out in several respects: the men shave their beards, while women 'enjoy much more liberty than their sisters of other Moslem countries' by working alongside the men, and usually go unveiled.[48] The visual impression of Kurds conveyed by travellers is of rather gaunt, austere figures, extremely suspicious of strangers.

The Kurds played a significant part in events in Persia, especially in Azerbaijan. The Buyid rulers of western Persia, although well supplied with native Dailami warriors augmented with Turkmen cavalry, on occasion employed Kurds as mercenaries. However, relations with the Kurds were complicated: while Rukn ad-Daula, ruling Jibal province in the 970s, felt the need to discipline the semi-nomadic tribes in and around Kurdistan who were disrupting local agriculture and communications, he was deterred by the strong position established by the Kurdish Hasanwaihid dynasty in neighbouring Hamadan, and the mountain Kurds' strategic control of the road linking the plateau with Baghdad. His successors fought many battles with the aim of 'saving Iraq from the Kurds'.[49]

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Kurdistan was dominated by three semi-nomadic tribes: the Shabankara'i in the south of Fars; the Shahanjan in the central homeland around Kirmanshah; and the Marwanid tribe on the upper Tigris in the borderland between Armenia and eastern Anatolia, which prospered as a vassal of the Fatimid caliphate of Egypt. When Persia fell to the Seljuqs the latter mostly did not attempt to rule them directly, but left them under their local rulers. The Shabankara'is kept their autonomy under the Seljuqs, but as the latter encouraged Turkmens to seek pastures in Kurdistan and Luristan, there was much unrest. 'Fārs continued to be racked by brigands and…internecine warfare amongst the local Kurdish tribes' and, although Seljuq governors sent many expeditions against the bandits, they failed to subdue the province. Shiraz was 'so devastated by Türkmen and Shabankara'i raids that it did not recover till the end of the…eleventh century'.[50] In the twelfth century the emir of Mosul planned a radical assault on the troublesome Shabankara'is, and after demolishing seventy of their castles he organized the restoration of agriculture and rebuilding of towns and irrigation works which the Kurds had destroyed.[51]

For many centuries the Armenians inhabited much of the same territory as the Kurds (see Map 10),[52] and historians have associated the Kurds with brigandage and extortion from agriculturalists. For instance, in the eighteenth century Armenian merchants organized the export of cargoes of merchandise on the upper Tigris and Euphrates, using large cargo-rafts mounted on inflated sheepskins. However, 'Below Diyarbekir…the Kurds used to levy…tribute on all who passed downstream, in default of which they would fire on the rafts, killing the passengers and crew, or else puncture the skins and force the rafts to put in to shore', where they were plundered.[53]


Black Sea
Constantinople
GEORGIA
Caspian Sea
Ankara
TURKEY
IRAN
Tehran
SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea
Damascus
Baghdad
IRAQ
Cairo
Armenians
Kurds
0 200 400 600 800 1000 km
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 miles

Map 10 Overlapping Armenian and Kurdish territories in the twentieth century (based on maps in G. Chaliand, ed., *People without a Country*): *The Kurds and Kurdistan*, London, 1980, p. 8, and *The Kurds: Caught Between Nations*. (Understanding Global Issues briefing no. 94/3), Cheltenham, 1994.

Many Kurds did not live in nomad tents, but utilized the inexhaustible supply of stones in their mountain environment to build villages with stone houses rising in tiers. For reasons of security their villages lay at altitudes between 3,000 and 7,000 feet.[54] Even in these high plateaux and valleys they cultivated crops: indeed, Kurdistan may have been the typical setting where the first grain crops were sown in neolithic times.[55] Kurdish agriculture was combined with transhumance – keeping sheep, goats and cattle on lower-lying pastures in winter, and driving them up to alpine meadows for the summer. For tribes engaged mainly in grazing in the Taurus–Zagros mountains, high-altitude routes lay open to lands far from the home village, so that in the days before formal state frontiers Kurds wandered far and wide among the high pastures of Azerbaijan.[56] On the other hand, the richest tribes of nomadic Kurds, who lived all year round in black tents of woven goat's wool, often rented grazing on well-watered winter pastures in the Tigris plain in Iraq. Up to quite recent times, Kurdish society was tribal, with more than thirty main clans led by chiefs claiming dynastic ancestry of more than 500 years. None in modern times, however, compared in prestige with the great sultan Salah ad-Din, known in English as Saladin, who in 1187 called on his Kurdish compatriots on the upper Tigris to declare *jihad* against the Christian Crusaders in Palestine, and victoriously commanded the Muslim army there until 1193.[57]

Despite the many vicissitudes which they went through in subsequent centuries the Kurdish people, strung out along their mountainous front between the Syrian–Iraqi plain and the plateau of the Caucasus (and in the twentieth century divided between the Arab, Turkish Persian and Russian states which dominated the neighbouring lands) remained an important element in international relations in the Middle East. In the Caucasus itself Kurds played a considerable part in the formation of Azerbaijan. Although by the early twentieth century their population was estimated at between 5 million and 15 million, and they began to develop national movements, in the arrangements arrived at in various international forums from the First World War until the present day the Kurds never achieved unification or (except in Iran) real local autonomy.[58]

The origins of Azerbaijan and Shirvan

In the twelfth century Azerbaijan, in contrast with Armenia and Georgia, had not yet emerged as a separate state and, although its name, derived from Atropatene, was old, ethnically it was still fluid. It was not a predominantly Turkish-speaking region, and indeed was not a country, but simply one province of Persia, centred on Tabriz, south of the Araxes – the ancient Median province of Atropatene, nowadays 'Persian Azerbaijan' (or Azerbaijan proper) – beyond which extended what the ancient Greeks had known as Greater Media, stretching almost as far as Qazvin and the Caspian coastal principalities. North of the Araxes and the Mtkvari/Kura the former Albania, with its Armenian and Georgian cultural connections and indigenous Caucasian languages, had for centuries been ruled by Persia, whose influence had prevailed until the Arab conquest made the shah's castle of Darband, as part of the Arab colonies of Bab al-Abwab and Shirvan, a bastion of Islam in the eastern Caucasus.[59] Although in Albania and Shirvan occasional infiltration by nomadic Turks may have begun from about the third century AD, farther south the appearance of Turks in significant numbers did not occur before the eleventh century.

By the tenth century, although the ^{c}Abbasid caliphs were still nominally the central authority in the Islamic empire, some provincial governors and generals displayed serious insubordination. According to a recent Azerbaijani (i.e. USSR–Shirvani) historian,

> the weakening of the caliphate's political power at the end of the ninth century led to the formation in Azerbaijan [Aran/Shirvan] of independent and semi-independent states, whose rulers gradually reduced the amount of tribute they paid to the caliph's treasury until they finally refused to pay any. Having thus achieved independence, it was only the caliph's spiritual authority that they acknowledged.[60]

The rulers of Shirvan from the late ninth to the middle of the eleventh century did not belong to a single nationality, but came from various ethnic backgrounds – Persian, Kurdish and Turkish. Caliph al-Mu^{c}tadhid (892–902) attempted to re-establish control over north-west Persia by importing from Soghdia Turks led by General ^{c}Abu'l-Saj, and in 898 he appointed the latter's son Muhammad ibn ^{c}Abu'l-Saj as governor of Azerbaijan and Armenia, where he subdued recalcitrant local rulers, until he was usurped in 901 by his uncle Yusuf ibn ^{c}Abu'l-Saj.[61] It has been claimed, dubiously, that Yusuf, by subjecting the whole of eastern Caucasia ‘from Darband in the north to Zanjan in the south’, including Shaki, Shirvan, Azerbaijan, Khachen and Syunik, for the first time united ‘all the Azerbaijanian lands into a single independent state’.[62] However, overreaching himself by storming Ray and neighbouring towns, Yusuf was attacked and imprisoned by Caliph al-Muqtadir until 922,[63] then reinstated as governor of north-west Persia, including Azerbaijan. Within two years Yusuf's successor was poisoned, bringing the Sajid dynasty to an end;[64] thereafter, Azerbaijan was no longer ruled by the caliphs' governors, but by whoever could seize control. One Arabic writer of the ninth–tenth century AD, al-Kufi, who describes 'Azerbaijan' (presumably meaning Atropatene and Aran) as part of the caliphate, does not mention Turks as an element in its population; another, Yakut, in thirteenth-century Shirvan, writes of the defence of Darband from 'various Turk tribes, atheists and other enemies [of Islam]', and mentions Oghuz and Turkmens setting up dwellings on 'Black Mountain' (Persian 'Siah kuh'), a Caspian island.[65]

For Armenia the years under Sajid rule were mainly unhappy, despite relative freedom from aggression by either Byzantium or the caliphate, both of which eventually acknowledged Ashot I (V) Bagratuni the Great (885–90) as king of a largely reunited Armenia, enjoying authority over the other rulers in Caucasia thanks to 'his scrupulous loyalty to the caliph'. However, his son, King Smbat I (or IX) the Martyr (890–914) faced the rivalry of Prince Gagik Artsruni of Vaspurakan, whose patron the Sajid Yusuf had favoured by crowning him too as king of Armenia, and in 917 it was Smbat's son that Yusuf recognized as King Ashot II (VI).[66]

Subsequent usurpers in Persian Azerbaijan included the Turkish *ghulam*, Daisam ibn Ibrahim al-Kurdi, who overcame his rivals – the ruler of the Caspian principality of Gilan and the emir of Mosul – and in 932 made himself ruler in Ardabil. Daisam is said to have 'preserved the political unity of Azerbaijan [proper]' until the 940s.[67] Azerbaijan, however, was coveted by other neighbours. In 941 Sallar al-Marzuban of Dailam invaded Ardabil, drove Daisam out and imposed his own new dynasty, the Sallarids. As al-Marzuban and his entourage professed Isma^{c}ilism, its doctrines were brought into Persian Azerbaijan, leading to a many-sided conflict involving the Dailamites, Daisam's Kurdish allies, the emir of

Mosul and the people of Tabriz. (Incidentally, it was about this time that Scandinavian Rus pirates sailed up the Araxes and briefly seized Bardha^{c}a in Aran.)

Al-Marzuban prevailed over all these forces, not only gaining Azerbaijan proper, but also adding Shirvan and Darband to his realm, and he reigned as suzerain of ‘most of the petty princes in the Caucasus…and Armenia’ until his death in 957, when strife between claimants to the succession persisted until the demise of the Sallarid dynasty in 983.[68]

Their place in Azerbaijan was taken by a dynasty founded in Tabriz in the eighth century by an Arab, Rawwad ibn al-Muthanna. The Rawwadids, through close association with the Hadhbani Kurds, were by the twelfth century ‘thoroughly Kurdicized’, thus causing a ‘rapid rise in strength of the Kurdish element’ in Azerbaijan.[69] Meanwhile, another Kurdish ruling family, the Shaddadids, were establishing themselves in Aran and Armenia. These were descendants of ‘a Kurdish adventurer’, Muhammad ibn Shaddad, from the mountains of Armenian Kurdistan, who had taken service with a Caspian dynasty, the Musafirids of Tarum, the current occupiers of the Armenian city of Dvin. About 966 Muhammad ibn Shaddad's youngest son al-Fadhl moved with his Kurdish retinue to Ganja where, having assisted the city's Sallarid rulers to expel squatters, they received permanent residence, and al-Fadhl's elder brother, al-Lashkari, became governor of Ganja (by murdering the incumbent). After al-Lashkari's death al-Fadhl murdered his middle brother and made himself ruler of Ganja, subsequently enlarging Shaddadid territory greatly by conquering Bardha^{c}a, Bailaqan and Dvin before his death in 1031. His son Abu'l Aswar Shawur based himself in Georgia and Armenia and inflicted much violence on Christians. Even the combined forces of Byzantium, Georgia and Armenia took ten years (1039–49) to persuade Abu'l Aswar to acknowledge Byzantine supremacy; meanwhile he was welcomed by the people of Shamkhor as their ruler and, having conquered the whole of Aran, became the emir of Dvin and Ganja.[70]

In the north the pre-Islamic population of Shirvan and Darband included many Iranian settlers from the Caspian principalities. After the Muslim invasion the Albanian Mihranids and other local rulers had been usurped by two Arab dynasties, the Hashimids of Darband and the Yazidids of Shirvan. The rulers of these two caliphate provinces competed for supremacy, feuding as often with other Muslims as with local rulers. Inevitably there were continual encounters between the Hashimids and their neighbours, the Avars of Daghestan and the Khazars. They also had to oppose incursions by Persian overlords from Dailam in south Caspia, and as the Hashimids and the Yazidids were nominally vassals of (Persian) Azerbaijan and Aran, in the 940s the Shirvan-shah was forced to submit to the Dailamis. The Emirate of Shirvan had attained autonomy during a time of instability in the caliphate around 861; thereafter its rulers Persianized their names, spuriously claiming descent from Persia's legendary fifth-century King Bahram Gur.[71] Later Shirvan became the most important principality north of the Araxes, while to the south, in Azerbaijan, Maragha was the capital of the caliph's governor. One Yazidid who seized the Shirvan throne in the early tenth century, Abu Ṭahir, built a new capital, Yazidiyya, near Shamakha, which his successor fortified when Oghuz Turkmen raids became a problem in the eleventh century. Whether the rulers of Bab al-Abwab and Shirvan made their submission to Toghryl Beg along with the princes of Aran and Azerbaijan in 1054 is not recorded, but subjection by the Seljuqs inevitably came soon thereafter.[72]

Azerbaijan and the Seljuq Turkish inundation

From the eleventh century the whole of north-western Persia (or eastern Caucasus) became an area of settlement for Turkish tribes from Central Asia and a staging base for their further advance westwards into Armenia and Byzantine Anatolia. This migration resulted in the Turkification of Azerbaijan, Aran and Shirvan, and profoundly affected the Persians and the peoples of Caucasia. It was in the 1020s, during the Rawwadid régime in Azerbaijan, that the first incursion of Oghuz rode through Persia, following the ancient road through Tabriz to the Araxes and the Armenian plateau. Although the first parties of these 'Iraqi Turkmens' were relatively peaceful and were welcomed by Azerbaijan's ruler Vahsudan, who enrolled some in his cavalry, the second wave in the late 1030s confirmed the settled population's apprehension by pillaging and slaughter, especially in Maragha. Vahsudan formed an alliance with the Hadhbani Kurds to eject them, but the Oghuz kept coming. Arslan ibn Seljuq's son Qutlumush became the leader of the Turkmen invaders in 1041, but relations between the Seljuqs and local rulers were not formalized until the visitation by Toghryl Beg thirteen years later.[73]

A feature of Islam which is important during new conquests is the *khuṭbā*: an exhortation following prayers in a congregational mosque on Fridays. During this, 'blessings are…called upon the ruler of the country and divine aid is invoked for him. The khuṭbā [is] thus…the occasion for a declaration of sovereignty…the name mentioned in the khuṭba was an indication…of the political allegiance of the region' – in practice, an assertion that the Muslim warlord who has newly conquered the territory is now its ruler.[74] Thus Toghryl Beg, after receiving the submission of Azerbaijan's governor Vahsudan in 1054, was named in the *khuṭbā* at Tabriz. Like all conquerors, the Seljuqs aimed to subjugate and exploit the countries they invaded, and their principal stipulation was the receipt of tribute from their vassals. Vahsudan provided the usual guarantee of this – one of his sons as a hostage, who was kept in the overlord's palace. After Vahsudan's death in 1059 another of his sons rebelled against Seljuq rule and invoked the help of the caliph, but the only result was reinvasion by Toghryl and imposition of a heavy tribute.[75]

Before the Arab conquest the dominant language throughout north-western Persia from about Qazvin and Azerbaijan to Shirvan and Darband, was Iranian, overlapping in Albania and southern Daghestan with indigenous Caucasian languages.[76] Here, as in Khorasan, the gradual infiltration of nomads from Central Asia may have introduced pockets of people speaking Turkic languages, but it was not until the eleventh-century Seljuq invasion that in eastern Caucasus Turkish was gradually adopted by much of the population.[77] Nevertheless, until the nineteenth century Farsi (Persian) remained the literary language even in Azerbaijan, along with Arabic as the language of Islam. Arabic script was used for both Farsi and 'Azerbaijani Turkish', which was increasingly used as a written language from the thirteenth century onwards, and as in other written vernaculars in Islamic countries (including Urdu in India) literary Azerbaijani absorbed many Persian and Arabic elements of vocabulary and grammar.[78] Azerbaijan gained a notable place in Farsi literature with the works of Niẓami of Ganja (c. 1141–1203), whose poems became famous throughout the Middle East, and the general flourishing of scholarship and the arts in Aran at that time is displayed in many fine buildings in the Persian style, particularly in Baku, and those designed by Ajami ibn Abu-Bakr in the khanate of Nakhchavan.[79]

The outline presented above is based on widely accepted historical accounts, but these are disputed in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan. For local patriots in the Caucasus – whether Armenian, Azerbaijani or Daghestani – the origins of modern Azerbaijan, the location and extent of its 'original' territory, and its ethnic composition are highly controversial questions, with regard both to the north – Albania/Shirvan – and to Azerbaijan proper (Media Atropatene) in the south.[80] As the Azerbaijanian editor of a recent history explains, in Soviet Azerbaijan a kind of Turkic nationalism was given free rein after Stalin's death, and from the 1960s onwards some Azerbaijani historians rejected the widely accepted view of their nation's ethnogenesis, including the importance of Iranian influence, and claimed other roots. Instead of sporadic settlement of Albania-Aran-Azerbaijan by Turkic-speaking incomers, beginning perhaps as early as the third century AD, and culminating in the Seljuq occupation,[81] Azerbaijanian 'historians…started advancing the idea that the Turkic element on the territory of [the Soviet Republic of] Azerbaijan was extremely ancient or even autochthonous'. Adopting 'ways of distorting linguistic evidence which were common among [nationalistic] scholars in Turkey, but had long been repudiated by academic scholarship', and ignoring all the evidence indicating a region between the Altai mountains and the Urals as the cradle of the language family to which Turkic languages belong, these Azerbaijani nationalists assert that the earliest Turks had lived in the Caucasus, including Azerbaijan.[82]

The downfall of the USSR permitted better sense to prevail among some Azerbaijanian historians:

> The fact is that the Azerbaijani people came into being through the gradual mixing and blending of the country's autochthonous population (descended from the Guti-Lullubei tribes, the Mannai, Atropatenians and Albanians) with…incoming Turkic-speaking tribes whose language eventually prevailed over the others. This mixing process…took almost 1,000 years. At first the Turcophone peoples trickled into Azerbaijan exclusively from the north, through the…'Derbent passage' (third to tenth centuries), but later mainly via Iran from Central Asia (eleventh to fourteenth centuries).[83]

The importance of the Medes in western Persia, and their great influence in neighbouring countries, is well attested from at least the ninth century BC, not only in Persian and Assyrian sources but also in the Hebrew Bible.[84] In the ninth to sixth centuries BC the power of the Median kings extended around the south-western end of the Caspian Sea, and northwards as far as the Araxes. This region is crucial in modern Azerbaijanis' ideas about their country's early history. It seems probable that, as Media dominated the region for some 300 years, and then became Persia's partner in a new empire (the two peoples being linguistically and culturally indistinguishable from each other), the regions labelled Media Magna and Media Atropatene on Greek maps[85] would have continued to be inhabited by Medes. Median history, however, suffers from a lack of sources, forcing historians to rely on inferences and conjectures.[86] Almost the only information comes from Herodotus, who says that the Scythians, having driven the Cimmerians out of eastern Europe and pursued them to the Caucasus, there encountered the Medes, whose kingdom they subjugated c. 652–625 BC.

A nineteenth-century Azerbaijani historian, Muhammad ᶜAli Kazembek, also recognizes the crucial importance of Media:[87]

> No other part of the ancient world was so subject as Northern Media to the ebb and flow of various peoples. From as far back as evidence goes the Caucasian isthmus was constantly the scene of political events: peoples of various races and mixtures were continually making incursions from the south…or the north…so that the roads linking the Caspian and the Black Sea knew no respite from migrations of peoples. There is abundant evidence of this in the present-day mixtures of languages encountered all along the Caucasus range…As Northern Media lay [in the plain] below the mountains, it was inevitably the first place to be inundated by these successive tides.[88]

Sumbatzadä concedes something to nationalism but, rather than the Medes, he gives prominence to their contemporaries the Mannaeans, who, as pre-Iranian ancestors of the Azerbaijanis, would presumably have spoken one of the autochthonous Caucasian languages. He argues that the south Azerbaijanis' indigenous roots go back far beyond those of the Medes, long predating their adoption of a Turkic language, thus ascribing to them a Caucasian pedigree of great antiquity.[89] The paucity of sources does not deter another historian from elaborating a similar case for the pre-Iranian, pre-Turkish, purely Caucasian origin of the Azerbaijanis on the same territory that they occupy today, subsequently ‘intermixing to a certain extent with Iranian-speaking migrants and particularly Turkic-speaking tribes – resulting in the formation of the unified Turkic-speaking Azerbaijanian people’.[90]

Turning to the twelfth century AD, a brief outline in a non-specialist history published in the 1970s presents a generally accepted view of twelfth-century Azerbaijan:

> After the fragmentation of the Great Seljuq state Azerbaijan, like the rest of Transcaucasia, was absorbed into the Seljuq Sultanate of Iraq (1118–94). *Note that even in the twelfth century the Shirvan state preserved its independence* [italics added] and the part it played in political and military affairs increased. Quite often the Shirvan-shahs allied themselves with Georgia's Bagratid rulers against the Seljuq invaders. This collaboration was strengthened by marriages between the ruling houses of the Shirvan and Georgian states.[91]

The term ‘Transcaucasia’ here was a standard piece of Russocentric misrepresentation, but otherwise this writer is rather objective, especially as regards the separateness from Azerbaijan proper of the state of Shirvan. However, he then introduces what has become a pillar of Azerbaijanian nationalist ideology:

> A crucial part in twelfth-century Azerbaijanian history was played by the Atabeg state of the Ildegizids[92] (1136–1225). Their main residences were Tabriz, Nakhchavan, Hamadan and Maragha. They had their own administration, army [and] coinage. Their vassals were the Pish-Tegin meliks [rulers] of Akhar. The

> Ildegizids’ sphere of influence embraced the Seljuqid Sultanates of Iraq and Kerman, the Shirvan state, the domains of the Salghurids of Fars, the emirates of the Artuqids, the Zangids [of Mosul in Iraq]…and Tabaristan province [of Persia]. The most renowned members of the dynasty were its founder, Shams ad-Din Ildegiz (1136–75), and his sons Jahan-Pahlavan…and Kyzyl-Arslan…under whom the new state of the Azerbaijan Sultanate arose. After Kyzyl-Arslan's death, however, this state declined, although descendants of the Ildegizids continued to govern various territories in Azerbaijan until 1225. A period of feudal disintegration and internecine wars set in, which lasted almost continuously until the Mongol invasion.[93]

In fact the Ildegüz ‘atabeg state’ was rather ephemeral, lasting only some sixty years, but Guliyev is careful to attribute to it a number of features ostensibly justifying its definition as a state – that it had its own government, army and coinage. The fourth qualifying feature mentioned – vassals – is weak, since Guliyev names only one: the local rulers (*malik*s) of the small principality of Ahar, north-east of Tabriz. Beyond that he is content to refer vaguely to the atabeg state's ‘sphere of influence’, including the Iraq and Kerman sultanates, the Shirvan state, the Salghurids of Fars, etc. He fails altogether to mention what is perhaps the principal requirement of a state – a national territory.[94]

Another recent Azerbaijani historian asserts that ‘the formation of the Turcophone Azerbaijani people’ was complete in ‘the eleventh to twelfth centuries’, and implies that Azerbaijan was then a country extending from Darband to Zanjan (some 400 miles). Formerly ‘uniting all the Azerbaijan territories within a single independent state’ under the Sajids, it had subsequently disintegrated and fallen victim to the Seljuqs (with the exception of Shirvan, which succeeded in remaining independent). The author then quotes an anonymous historian of the thirteenth century: ‘Tabriz during the most august reign of atabek Shamsaddin Ildeniz…became the capital’ – as if Azerbaijan was a state separate and distinct from Iran – despite explicitly stating that ‘Dynastic squabbles led in 1118 to the formation of the Iraq Sultanate, of which Azerbaijan too was a part’, and describing its ‘central authority’ as ‘the Seljuq state and government’.[95] In fact, geographically and culturally all of this was still Persia, both before and after the Seljuqs and, while the region known as Azerbaijan may have been showing signs of emerging as an ethnic and political entity, these were scarcely sufficient to justify the claim that this had occurred by the twelfth century.

Two aspects of the assertion by twentieth-century Baku–Azerbaijani historians of the extreme antiquity of their political origins which particularly lack objectivity are their overestimation of the ‘state’ founded by Azerbaijan's atabeg régime, and their attempt to play down its unquestionable Persian context. Still less creditable is their bending of historical evidence to serve anti-Armenian ends, ostensibly proving the invalidity of Armenia's historical claim to any part of the territory included within the present-day Azerbaijanian republic – specifically, Highland Karabagh and Nakhchavan. In other respects, too, the view of the ‘Atabeg state of Azerbaijan (1136–1225)’[96] presented by north Azerbaijani historians is unconvincing and simplistic, because it ignores the fact that, although this ‘was a time during which Iranian civilization reached heights of religious and secular achievements that have not been easily surpassed’, yet in ‘many ways the Saljuq period did not differ from the preceding or succeeding periods. It was a time of chronic wars; and hardship, famine, pestilence, violence, ignorance, and superstition were all common.'[97] In this context Azerbaijan's atabegs were simply some of the many warlords of their day in Persia and the Caucasus.

Like 'regent' or 'guardian', the Turkish term 'atabeg' originally denoted a substitute to whom a ruler's powers were deputed temporarily during his prolonged absence, illness or minority. Under the Seljuqs in Persia a new variant of this widely known office appeared when a tutor was appointed to the 17-year-old Sultan Malik-Shah I. The tutor, or guardian, was Niẓam al-Mulk, the outstanding vizier and author of 'The Book of Government' (*Siyaset Nāme*); his official title as preceptor to the prince was 'father-prince' – in Turkish 'ata-beg'.[98] Thereafter tutors with this title were attached to many princes,[99] as guardians became necessary amid the constant intriguing and raiding within and between Seljuq Persia's constituent emirates.

As with any administrative position, an important consideration for an atabeg was the remuneration going with the post. This was generally awarded in the form of *iqṭa*, a 'cut' of land,[100] originally applied by the Arabs in newly conquered countries to estates which had not been left under their original native owners (according to the rule theoretically prevailing), but had been confiscated as property of the caliphate. Under the Persian (Buyid) system parcels of such 'state' lands were granted as *iqṭa*s to army officers as their source of direct income, instead of having to await payment through government tax-collectors. Malik-Shah himself is said to have granted *iqṭa*s to 46,000 soldiers:[101]

From the accession of Malik-Shah's successor, Sultan Mahmud,

> an increasing amount of the country [i.e. the Seljuq Persian empire] was alienated from the central government as ‘administrative’ iqṭā^cs granted to the amīrs, until finally the area directly administered by the sultan became almost negligible…In theory the…iqṭā^c was not hereditary; but as…[the amīrs’] power grew, a hereditary tendency appeared, and several amīrs transferred their iqta^cs to their…dependants by inheritance…The iqtā^c system did not in itself involve decentralization or even a relaxation of the authority of the central government. Under a strong ruler it contributed to the strength and cohesion of the state, but under a weak ruler it led to political disintegration…Also by abuse the system contributed to the growth of ‘private’ armies, and to the virtual subjection of the peasantry.[102]

During the last decades of the Seljuq dynasty the number of *iq*ṭā*^c*s allotted increased, as did their size and length of tenure, and as more of them became heritable it was in the interests of their holders to improve conditions for their peasants. Indeed, ‘Some successors of the Saldjuks…explicitly proclaimed the right of inheritance to *ikt*ās in order to secure the loyalty of their troops in the struggle against the Crusaders.’[103] Under Sultan Maḥmud's régime the part they played as real estate increased in importance, as did appointments as atabegs. Henceforth only Turks of military standing became eligible, but their numbers increased greatly, as the status of ‘father-prince’ became a mere convention, and eventually ‘the *atabeg*'s position was consolidated at the expense of that of the prince…[so that] the respective roles of prince and *atabeg* were reversed’. An emir who had served the sultan well could be rewarded with an estate or a governorship (carrying with it valuable *iq*ṭā^{c}s), and to guarantee his continuing loyalty a fictional guardian–ward relationship would be created, whereby he became the nominal atabeg to a young prince. Some such atabegs contrived to make their posts and the accompanying estates hereditary. ‘Nor was it unknown for an *atabeg* to found his own dynasty thanks to the fortuitous death (or suppression) of his superior’, so that ultimately the title became simply another term for a territorial prince.[104]

All these circumstances – especially the extreme turmoil in Persia's north-western territories, the lack of one central authority, and the commercialization of the institutions of *iqta* and atabeg–make it difficult to accept the special significance claimed for the Eldigüz atabeg state as a political innovation in the chaotic Perso-Seljuq region.

Armenia, Byzantium, Turks and Crusaders

Relations between the medieval princes of Armenia and Georgia and their Muslim rulers were not simply those of the oppressed and the oppressor. Muslim overlords sometimes acted as patrons of their vassals just as the Byzantine emperor or the pope did. For instance, one of the Bagratuni kings who brought Armenia to the height of its power – Ashot I (V) the Great (885–90) – was granted the Persian title *shahinshah* ‘king of kings’ by the caliph of Baghdad while also being recognized as king by the Byzantine emperor. Some Armenian rulers invoked the caliph's assistance against

Azerbaijani oppression, but it was also by no means rare for Armenian and Georgian princes to ask the emirs of Azerbaijan to help them in their internecine conflicts. Even Emperor Constantine IX Monomakhos, setting out to conquer Christian Armenia in the eleventh century, did not scruple to use the emir of Dvin's army to depose the Armenian king.[105]

Nevertheless, confrontation on religious or ethnic grounds was very common. For instance, Azerbaijanian chiefs squabbled for years over the Armenian city of Dvin, and in the 990s when the Armenian Kouropalates Davit of Taikh recaptured Manazkert he (not surprisingly) drove out its Muslim occupiers. The ‘widespread indignation’ caused by this in the Muslim world allowed the Rawwadid prince Muhammad ibn Abu'l-Haija to declare *jihad* against the Armenians – only to be routed twice by an alliance of Davit with another Armenian king, Gagik I, and the Georgian Bagrat II. Byzantium also made demands on the Armenians because of its need to defend its eastern frontier. In 1021, in the south-eastern province of Vaspurakan, the last Artsruni king Hovhannes-Smbaṭ was forced by Seljuq attacks and Byzantine insistence to cede his territory to the empire and move with his subjects 350 miles west to Sebastea (Sivas) in Cappadocia. The Greeks also occupied the Armenian kingdom of Shiraḳ and its capital Ani and put an end to the Bagratuni dynasty by treacherously imprisoning the young king Gagik II (1042–45).[106]

By the 1040s the whole of Armenia was annexed to the Byzantine Empire, but in 1048 the Seljuqs launched a concerted attack: advancing from Mesopotamia, they raided several Armenian provinces, destroying towns and killing thousands of people. One result of the Byzantine army's severe defeat at Basen in the Araxes valley was that Constantinople softened its attitude towards Armenia, allowing some landowners to return to their estates, and reducing its persecution of the Gregorian Church. In 1054 another massive Seljuq campaign against Armenia was launched by Toghryl Beg, but his advance on Kars was halted at Vanand, and Manazkert was defended even more resolutely. Despite this heroic resistance Armenia was ravaged and pillaged, so that much of the population fled to Georgia or to the mountains, leaving agricultural areas depopulated. Yet another invasion came in 1064, during which Alp-Arslan subjugated Armenia's outlying kingdoms of Lori and Syunik, devastated Ani and the Ararat plain, and occupied eastern Georgia and Albania. The Seljuqs were also making extended raids into Asia Minor: between 1066 and 1070 they sacked the Cappadocian Greek cities of Caesarea, Melitene, Sebastea, Neocaesarea and, further west, Ikonium, and nearly reached the Aegean coast. Goaded into action, Constantinople – although itself threatened by an invasion of its south Italian territory by Normans from France – mustered 100,000 men, 'of which perhaps half were Byzantine-born, but only a very few…were professional soldiers and none was well-equipped', the remainder being foreign mercenaries, particularly Kypchak Turks and Frankish and Norman cavalry. Their commander, Romanus Diogenes, recently crowned emperor, marched this large but unreliable imperial army across Anatolia to the upper Euphrates – and in August 1071 near Manazkert they were overwhelmed by Alp-Arslan's army, partly because they were deserted by their mercenaries. Because of this 'most decisive disaster in Byzantine history' the emperor was forced to cede most of Armenia and several Anatolian provinces to the Seljuqs.[107] The Seljuq state expanded farther under Alp-Arslan's successor Malik-Shah, but by 1120 former Armenia had been divided into numerous warring emirates, while Turkmens moved into the steppe districts, driving out their long-established Armenian inhabitants. A few independent Armenian principalities, such as Sasun and Aghtamar, still survived, but even they, along with Syunik and Vanand, were subjugated in the end, while Lori was annexed by Georgia.[108]

Henceforth the major arena of conflict was Asia Minor, or Anatolia[109] – the large peninsula forming 95% of the total area of modern Turkey – a westward extension of the Armenian plateau. As less than 50% of Anatolia lies below 1,500 feet and 25% is over 4,000 feet, the climate is extreme, with dry summers and very cold winters with heavy snowfall. In the eleventh century no country called ‘Turkey’ existed: the whole of Anatolia was still part of the Eastern Roman Empire, ruled from Constantinople on the European side of the Bosporus, and populated largely by Greeks. Before the Seljuqs’ invasion the Byzantine–Muslim frontier had lain from Trebizond on the Black Sea coast to the Mediterranean Gulf of Alexandretta on the border of Syria, but eastern Anatolia had long been exposed to Turkmen intrusions, and many towns, including Theodosiopolis (later Erzurum), Melitene (Malatya), Caesarea (Kayseri) and Ikonium (Konya) were ravaged by them.[110] Thereafter, as thousands of Muslim Turkmens flooded westwards, Anatolia's Greek and Armenian inhabitants either assimilated to them, found refuge in coastal areas, or moved east to form new communities on the Euphrates.[111]

By the twelfth century the Byzantine state was in a resurgent phase and, although the Seljuqs pushed its Asian frontier far to the west, it was still guarded vigilantly to keep marauders out, while Turks already living within the Greeks’ borders were obliged to abandon nomadism. East of this frontier there were many separate Turkish emirates, particularly that of the Danishmends around Sebastea in the north-east, and the Seljuq state of Ikonium, which Muslims called Rūm (‘Rome’) – since 1075 now a sultanate which fostered Persian culture and Arabic learning based on Sunni orthodoxy, and ‘had little enthusiasm for the Holy War’; indeed ‘relations with the Byzantine court usually remained cordial, even culminating in the occasional alliance by marriage between Konya and Constantinople’. The Danishmends, on the other hand, were ‘rough soldiers who had scarcely come into contact with the refinements of Islamic civilisation’, and tended towards folk Shi^{c}ism, with dervishes and shamans. As upholders of the *ghazi* tradition, ‘all they asked was to do battle for Islam’.[112]

The Seljuqs’ mass invasion of Anatolia, and their probing through Syria and Palestine towards Egypt, set in motion events of enormous consequence, especially for the Byzantine Empire. Although the countries of the Caucasus were not central to this, they too were profoundly affected by political changes resulting from these events. On the Christian side the momentous event of the late eleventh century was the First Crusade – a huge military expedition under French, Flemish and Italian leadership, mounted in the name of the Catholic Church with the aim of liberating Palestine – specifically Jerusalem – from Islam. Until the tenth century the Muslims had generally facilitated access to Palestine's religious shrines by Jews and Christians, but under Egypt's Fatimid régime, the situation deteriorated and their caliph al-Hakim destroyed many Christian monuments. Although the Seljuqs drove the Fatimids out of Jerusalem in 1071, the violence of their conquest of Syria made Christian pilgrimage so perilous that it was practically discontinued. The idea of a campaign by European knights to liberate Eastern Christians from Saracen oppression and regain access to Jerusalem was propagated by Pope Urban II in November 1095, and in the following spring the vanguard of the First Crusade set out from western Europe under the leadership of various princes, on a march of some 1,500 miles from the Rhine to Constantinople, and a further 800 miles across Asia Minor to Antioch in Syria. Welcomed in Constantinople by Emperor Alexius I Comnenus in autumn 1096, the first 20,000 armed pilgrims crossed the Bosporus and made an ill-planned advance on Nicaea, where they were scattered or slain by the Turks.[113] It was not until Easter 1097 that a serious crusading force – the large, well-equipped (and fanatically anti-Jewish) Frankish army led by Duke Godefroi of Bouillon – arrived and, after boorish behaviour towards Emperor Alexius, moved towards the Bosporus.[114] Over the following 180 years many more crusades were to come – a series of west European expeditions which left traces not only in Anatolia and the Arab lands, but also in Caucasia.

In April 1097 the force from the Rhine moved eastward to besiege the Turkish garrison in Nicaea, which surrendered to Alexius in June. Heading south with help from the Byzantine army, the Crusaders reached Ikonium, which the Turks abandoned. Thence the eastward road skirting the northern edge of the Taurus mountains took them to Heraclea, where they defeated the Danishmends, and eventually arrived on the outskirts of Antioch, some six months after their march began. The Christians stormed Antioch's outer fortifications, but its citadel remained in Saracen hands, and as the emir of Mosul's large army surrounded them, the Crusaders found themselves besieged within the walls they had just taken until June 1098, when they broke out and routed the Turks. The Crusaders were then free to advance towards Jerusalem, but the campaign was long delayed by the enmity beween their commanders, Raymond of Toulouse and Bohemond of

Taranto, and it was not until January 1099 that they moved down the Mediterranean coast, taking Jerusalem in July and marking its ‘liberation’ by massacring every Muslim and Jewish man, woman and child found there. More bloody battles followed until December 1100 when, after unseemly squabbling among their leaders, Baudouin of Boulogne was crowned ruler of the ‘Kingdom of Jerusalem’ – a new state with vassal principalities of Antioch, Edessa and Tripolis held by various European barons.[115]

Antioch – a Syrian city of great importance to Christians as St Paul's centre for proselytizing in Roman Asia Minor – became a bone of contention not only among the Crusaders, but also between the Orthodox patriarch and the pope of Rome. When the leaders of the Crusade first arrived in Constantinople Emperor Alexius had made it a condition of their receiving permission to pass through his realm that each swore an oath of allegiance to him as a guarantee of good conduct. He also stipulated that he would join the Crusaders in Antioch after their conquest of the city and take possession of it in the name of the Greek Church. However, because of new dangers in Anatolia he cut short his journey and returned to Constantinople, allowing the Crusaders to indulge further their prejudices against Greek Orthodoxy in general and Alexius in particular.[116]

Alexius's successor, John II Comnenus (1118–43), led his army into Syria on two occasions. In August 1137 he arrived at Antioch and, finding the gates of the city closed against him, and Prince Raymond absent, immediately had it bombarded by siege engines. When Raymond returned to the besieged stronghold he demanded negotiations, but the emperor insisted on unconditional surrender, and asserted Orthodox authority over Antioch by requiring the prince to kneel before him in homage.[117] Emperor John then moved to Cilicia, where his army attacked ^{c}Imad ad-Din Zangi, the Seljuq sultan's governor of Mosul, Anatolia and Syria, who had long waged aggressive warfare against his neighbours – whether Christians or Muslims.[118] In 1138 Emperor John found his attacks on Zangi frustrated by his supposed allies, the Frankish lords Joscelin and Raymond, who had churlishly ignored the fighting. After imposing terms on the emir, Emperor John returned to Antioch and, as a demonstration of Byzantine sovereignty, he made a ceremonial entry, riding on horseback with his vassals Prince Raymond and Count Joscelin flanking him on foot as grooms. However, they excluded him from the citadel, and they and the emperor took leave of each other 'with an outward show of friendship and complete mutual mistrust', leaving unresolved the question whether religious authority in Antioch was to belong to a Catholic bishop or an Orthodox patriarch.[119]

Although Muslims used the name 'Rum' (Rome) for Byzantium, asserting the continuity between Rome and Constantinople, the essential identity of their religions which it implied was belied by the Christians' obsession with the political status of the two empires and their conflict on dogma and ritual – which mirrored the conflicts within Islam:

> The Shia Moslems, headed by the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt, loathed the Sunni Turks and the Caliph of Baghdad quite as much as they loathed the Christians. Amongst the Turks there was perpetual rivalry between the Seldjuks and the Danishmends…The success of the Crusade only added to this ineffectual chaos.[120]

Although the folly of Muslim and Christian paladins and zealots is sometimes noted, their demonstration of the harmfulness of religion as a source of human conflict is rarely mentioned, although its relevance remains clear in the twenty-first century.

By middle of the twelfth century the continuing strength of Muslim resistance to the Christian conquest of Syria and Palestine and the increasing power of the Seljuqs were causing concern in Europe.[121] Since the First Crusade several small, abortive expeditions had reached Constantinople, but when Zangi stormed Edessa in 1144 serious official planning for a second Crusade began. Its instigators included Pope Eugenius III, the French king Louis VII and Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux; King Konrad of Hohenstaufen recruited a large German contingent; and others came from Bohemia and Poland. On the long march to the east the Crusaders' rank and file behaved as disreputably as their predecessors, and there was much inter-ethnic friction, as 'Germans and French alike were ill-disposed towards Byzantium.'[122] Relations among Crusader princes who had seized estates in Syria and Palestine, and between them and the Byzantine emperor, were bad. Raymond had demanded that the new emperor, Manuel Comnenus, return Armenian Cilicia to the principality of Antioch, and on the emperor's refusal invaded the territory – only to be routed by Greek land and sea forces.

The 'Holy Roman Emperor', Konrad of Germany, who had set out from Constantinople with his own army, but little knowledge of Anatolia, ignored the emperor's advice and lost most of his men in a Turkish ambush. The behaviour of most Crusaders was violently anti-Greek, and they were tempted to attack Constantinople. After much harassment by Turkish archers the Crusaders arrived at Antioch in March 1148, and in June set out to conquer Damascus. Five days after arriving there they abandoned their attack and retreated to Acre, and by summer 1149 all the Western potentates had left for home, having achieved nothing.[123]

Nevertheless, a Third Crusade followed in 1189–92, led by no less a person than Germany's ‘Holy Roman Emperor’, Friedrich I Barbarossa, who marched through Anatolia fighting the Turks, then accidentally drowned before reaching Antioch. Another notable participant, Richard I of England, arrived in June 1191, having annexed Byzantine Cyprus in passing, and spent 16 months engaging in mutually respectful but bloodthirsty warfare with Saladin, before returning to England. Further crusading expeditions travelled to the east until the late thirteenth century, and crusading fever came to an end (as did the presence in the ‘Holy Land’ of a lordly expatriate squatter community from the countries of Western Europe) only when in 1291 their main base, Acre, was totally demolished by the Mamluk sultan of Egypt.[124] The foregoing outline illustrates some of the events in the Crusades in the Near East, involving Greeks of the Byzantine Empire, Armenians, more or less devout legions from Europe, Arabs of Syria, Iraq and Palestine, and the Seljuq Turks, as they fought over possession of the ‘Holy Land’. This was the political environment awaiting any contemporary resident of the Caucasus who might venture south-west from his own land, or of which he would learn by hearsay from merchants at the local caravansarai in Tabriz or Tiflis.

Other foreigners of increasing significance in the Levant were Italian seafarers from Venice, Genoa and Sicily, who were purveying knowledge of navigation and shipbuilding to the hitherto land-locked Turks as they regularly visited these shores as traders – particularly in the commodity of human slaves. Caucasians were especially familiar with this sinister aspect of regional commerce: the ubiquitous practice of slave-procurement, either as spoils of war, raiding or purchase, which removed to the emporiums of Islamic lands thousands of women, girls and boys from Armenia, Georgia, Circassia and the Kypchak steppe.[125]

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[1] S. Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 14–16.

[2] As 'Kazakh' and 'Kazakhstan' are merely spelling conventions invented by the Russians to distinguish between their word 'Cossack' (*kazak* – the same Turkic word adopted in Russian) and the Central Asian nation, for which the spellings *Qazaq* and *Qazaqstan* are often used, the forms employed in this book will be 'Kazak' and 'Kazakstan'.

[3] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 78–91.

[4] Soucek, *History*, pp. 46, 52–5; Vaglieri, 'Patriarchal and Umayyad', p. 79.

[5] B.-A. B. Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya v XV–XVIII vv.*, Alma-Ata, 1988, p. 20.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 26; *Istoriya Kazakhstana s drevneyshikh vremyon do nashikh dney (ocherk)*, edited by M. K. Kozybayev, *et al*., Almaty, 1993, pp. 106, 109, 113.

[7] Often spelt ‘Seljuk’ or ‘Saljuq’. Here ‘Seljuq’ will be used in accordance with considerations explained in Bosworth, ‘Early Ghaznavids’. See also his ‘Saldjukids’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. VIII, esp. pp. 937–8.

[8] Bosworth, ‘Early Ghaznavids’, p. 162; *Narody Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana*, vol. I, pp. 78, 83–4; Vaglieri, ‘Patriarchal and Umayyad’, pp. 78–9.

[9] V. V. Bartold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 4th edn, London, 1977, pp. 93–4; Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, pp. 44–5; Frye, *History of Ancient Iran*, pp. 18, 44–5, 56, 207, 263, 354, map II. Well-illustrated brief accounts of these regions in the Middle Ages appear in the series *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vols. III and IV, Paris, 1996–98.

[10] Bartold, *Turkestan*, p. 201; Frye, ‘Samanids’, pp. 136–40, 144.

[11] Bosworth, ‘Early Ghaznavids’, pp. 162–4.

[12] Frye, ‘Samanids’, p. 159; Spuler, ‘Disintegration’, pp. 146–7.

[13] Bosworth, ‘Early Ghaznavids’, p. 162.

[14] *Ibid*., pp. 164–5; Frye, ‘Samanids’, p. 152.

[15] Bosworth, ‘Early Ghaznavids’, pp. 168–9; C. E. Bosworth, ‘The Ghaznavids’, in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. IV, part 1, Paris, 1998, p. 98; Frye, ‘Samanids’, pp. 156–9; Spuler, ‘Disintegration’, p. 147.

[16] Bosworth, 'Early Ghaznavids', p. 185; R. N. Frye, 'Preface', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, p. xi; G. Lazard, 'The rise of the New Persian Language', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 598–600.

[17] Bosworth, 'Early Ghaznavids', pp. 174–5, 189–90; Bosworth, 'Political and dynastic history', pp. 8, 141.

[18] Bosworth, 'Early Ghaznavids', pp. 177–9.

[19] *Ibid*., pp. 175–9; Busse, 'Iran under the Būyids', pp. 290, 293, 295.

[20] Bosworth, 'Early Ghaznavids', p. 177.

[21] *Ibid*., pp. 169–70.

[22] *Ibid*., pp. 189–90; C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994–1040*, Edinburgh, 1963, p. 221; F. Taeschner, 'The Turks and the Byzantine Empire to the end of the thirteenth century', in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part 1, pp. 737–52; Lewis, 'Government', p. 653.

[23] Bosworth, 'Early Ghaznavids', pp. 190–1; Bosworth, 'Political and dynastic history', p. 20.

[24] Bartold, *Turkestan*, pp. 281–5; Bosworth, 'Early Ghaznavids', pp. 174–5; Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, pp. 224–5, 234–5, 241–4, 249–50.

[25] Bosworth, ‘Early Ghaznavids’, pp. 191, 193–6; Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 20–2.

[26] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 18–19, 22–3, 42, 44, 49–52, 54–62, 66–9, 74–7, 87–91, 93–8, 101–3, 104 (map); O. Turan, ‘Anatolia in the period of the Seljuks and the *Beyliks*’, in *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, p. 234.

[27] Lewis, *Middle East*, pp. 90, 108, 147–9.

[28] Bartold, *Turkestan*, pp. 329–30, 332; Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 67, 102, 135–7, 140–6, 149–57, 182; Bosworth, ‘Saldjukids’, pp. 943, 945–6.

[29] A. Sevim and C. E. Bosworth, ‘The Seljuqs and the Khwarazm Shahs’, in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. IV, part 1, pp. 164–5, 167–70, 174–5.

[30] Bartold, *Turkestan*, pp. 308–10.

[31] Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, pp. 205–7, 212.

[32] Bartold, *Turkestan*, p. 305.

[33] *Ibid*., pp. 214–15, 309–10; Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 15, 17–18.

[34] Bartold, *Turkestan*, pp. 308–9.

[35] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 55–7.

[36] A. K. S. Lambton, ‘Internal structure of the Saljuq empire’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, p. 207.

[37] Guillaume, *Islam*, pp. 134–8; Lambton, ‘Internal structure’, pp. 203, 205–7, 286.

[38] Lambton, ‘Internal structure’ pp. 205–7.

[39] Bartold, *Turkestan*, p. 310.

[40] From the Arabic root *mlk* ‘to possess’, which gives both *malik* ‘king’ and *mamlūk* ‘possession’ including ‘a slave’.

[41] Hodgson, ‘Isma^{c}ili state’, pp. 424–30, 441–3, 478.

[42] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 112, 126–7, 169–73; B. Lewis, ‘Egypt and Syria’, in *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, pp. 199–201, 203–4.

[43] Bartold, *Turkestan*, pp. 323–31; Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 93, 141–5, 181–3; Sevim and Bosworth, ‘Seljuqs and the Khwarazm Shahs’, pp. 164–70.

[44] It was not until 1935 that the status of the Kurdish language as a relative of Persian became accepted, thanks to V. Minorsky, who also held that the Kurds originated in Media Minor/Atropatene, the present-day Azerbaijan: V. Minorsky, ‘Les origines des Kurdes’, *Actes du XXe Congrès International des Orientalistes*, Louvain, 1940, pp. 143–52, quoted by B. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes: étude sociologique et historique*, Paris, 1956, pp. 8–16; D. N. MacKenzie, ‘The origins of Kurdish’, *Transactions of the Philological Society*,

1961, pp. 68–86; Ch. Kh. Bakayev, ‘Kurdskiy yazyk’, in *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. I, *Indoyevropeyskiye yazyki*, pp. 257–80.

[45] G. R. Driver, ‘The dispersion of the Kurds in ancient times’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1921, pp. 563–72, and Driver, ‘The name Kurd and its philological connexions’, *Ibid*., 1923, pp. 393–403; V. Minorsky, ‘Kurds, Kurdistan’, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. V, pp. 447–9.

[46] S. C. Pelletiere, *The Kurds: an Unstable Element in the Gulf*, Boulder, 1984, p. 20; H. C. Rawlinson and C. Weatherly, ‘Kūrdistān’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edn, 1911, vol. XXV, p. 949.

[47] T. Bois, *The Kurds*, translated from French by M. W. M. Welland, Beirut, 1966, pp. 86–92, 95–7; Bosworth, ‘Ṭahirids and Ṣaffarids’, pp. 101, 110, 112–13; W. Eilers, ‘Iran and Mesopotamia’, in *Cambridge History of Iran, vol. III, The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanid Periods*, edited by E. Yarshater, part 1, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 500–1.

[48] Bois, *Kurds*, pp. 43–5, 52, 89.

[49] Busse, ‘Iran under the Būyids’, pp. 251–2, 269–70, 279, 291.

[50] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 24, 42, 46–7, 79, 86–7, 89–90, 109, 113; Lambton, ‘Internal structure’, pp. 245–6.

[51] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 116–17, 171–3; S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols.,

Harmondsworth, 1965, vol. II, pp. 110–15.

[52] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, p. 190; D. Kinnane, *The Kurds and Kurdistan*, Oxford, 1964, p. viii.

[53] Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 23, 31, 35.

[54] T. Bois, 'Kurds, Kurdistān', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. V, p. 445; Minorsky, 'Kurds, Kurdistān', p. 440; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, books VI and VII, *Anabasis*, books I–III, with an English translation by C. L. Brownson, London, 1921, p. 491; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, books IV–VII, *Symposium and Apology*, London, 1922, pp. 3–23, 137.

[55] Bois, 'Kurds, Kurdistān', p. 444; *Past Worlds*, pp. 80–1.

[56] C. Brunner, 'Geographical and administrative divisions: settlements and economy', in Cambridge History of Iran, vol. III, part 2, pp. 762, 766; Cahen, 'Tribes', p. 310; see also F. Stark, *The Valleys of the Assassins and Other Persian Travels*, London, 1936, for a sensitive first-hand account of a solo Englishwoman's travels on horseback on mountain trails among the high meadows of Persian Kurdistan, although not among Lurs, but Kurds.

[57] Bois, *Kurds*, p. 31; Minorsky, 'Kurds, Kurdistān', pp. 455–6, 458–61. Apparently 490 Kurdish tribes are listed in a Persian dictionary of Kurdish: Muhammad Mardukh, *Kitāb farhang-i Mardukh*, 2 vols., n.p., n.d., vol. I, pp. 75–119, cited by Bois, 'Kurds, Kurdistan', p. 471.

[58] See Pelletiere, *Kurds*.

[59] One of the monumental stone inscriptions celebrating the early Sasanian king Shapur I (AD 241–72) proclaims that he conquered ‘the land of Armenia, Georgia, Albania and Balasagan, up to the Gate of the Albanians [Darband]’ (note the absence of ‘Azerbaijan’, although the territory conquered is obviously intended to be comprehensive: Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, p. 208, 215; Frye, *History of Ancient Iran*, p. 298.

[60] I. G. Aliyev, ed., *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana s drevneyshikh vremyon do nachala XX veka*, Baku, 1995, p. 209.

[61] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 114–16.

[62] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, p. 209.

[63] Mottahedeh, ‘^{c}Abbasid caliphate’, pp. 82–3.

[64] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. IV, p. 49; new edn, vol. I, p. 660; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 228–32. The body of Turkish troops formed by Yusuf in Baghdad continued to exist under the clan name, Sajiyya.

[65] al-Kufi, *Kitāb al-futukh*, pp. 69–70, 84 n. 117; Yakut al-Hamawi, *’Mu^{c}dzham al-buldan*, translated from Arabic by Z. M. Buniyatov and P. K. Zhuze, Baku, 1983, pp. 15, 27, 31.

[66] Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 226–39; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 124–5.

[67] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 116; a somewhat more complicated series of events is detailed in Madelung,

‘Minor dynasties’, p. 232.

[68] Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 198–222, 232–6; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 116–17.

[69] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 32–3; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 236–7.

[70] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 12, 27, 30–2, 34–5, 289; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 223–4, 239–43; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 618–19.

[71] Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 226–7, 241, 243–9; Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, p. 225.

[72] Ashurbeyli, Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov, pp. 46–8; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 126; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 226–9, 245–9.

[73] P. B. Golden, ‘The Turkic peoples and Caucasia’, in Suny, ed., *Transcaucasia*, pp. 45–67; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, pp. 236–9.

[74] Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 329, 345–9, 354, 359–60.

[75] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 19, 20, 42–5, 48–9, 54–5, 61, 63–4, 96; Lewis, *Middle East*, pp. 90, 147–50; Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, p. 237.

[76] Madelung, ‘Minor dynasties’, p. 226; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 43; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 63–76;

Yazyki narodov SSSR, vol. I, *Indoyevropeyskiye yazyki*, p. 281; see also map in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, pp. 60–1.

[77] The time and significance of the arrival of the Seljuq Turks are a topic of nationalistic argument among Azerbaijanis: Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 5–7; Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, p. 67; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 25, 35, 51–2, 58–9, 63–4; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 45.

[78] Z. Budagova, *Azerbaydzhanskiy yazyk (kratkiy ocherk)*, Baku, 1982, pp. 7–8; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 64, 73, 77 (in this Soviet book the use of Farsi as the literary language is scarcely hinted at); A. H. Harley, *Colloquial Hindustani*, London, 1944, pp. ix–x; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 107, 131–5, 156–60.

[79] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 216–30; Gink and Turánszky, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 27–33, 44–50, illus. 37–48, 67–81; Nizami Ganjevi, *Leyli i Medzhnun* [Russian translation], Baku, 1982, pp. 5–9; Nizami Ganjevi, *Stikhotvoreniya i poemy (Biblioteka poeta)*, Leningrad, 1981, p. 5; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 160–70.

[80] See Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albania*, pp. 23–66, 112–28, etc.; Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 2–3; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 83, 89; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 60, 70, 124, etc.; C. J. Walker, 'The Armenian presence in mountainous Karabakh', in S. Goldenberg, R. Schofield and J. F. R. Wright, eds., *Transcaucasian Boundaries*, London, 1996, pp. 91–2.

[81] This traditional view is followed by Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 5–7.

[82] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, p. 12.

[83] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 10–11, 27–34. For the Guti-(or Quti-)Lullubei tribes, see Frye, *History of Ancient Iran*, pp. 29, 84.

[84] Stories in Esther 1 (itself related to Persian folklore) and Daniel 1–6, including Belshazzar's feast, where the conquest of Babylon by the king of Persia is foretold, and their proverbial references to the immutability of ‘the law of the Medes and the Persians’ indicate the high status of the Iranians throughout the Middle East, as does the fact that, while the earliest Old Testament books date events by the regnal years of Jewish kings or those of Assyria and Babylon, later prophets, e.g. Ezra, Nehemia and Zachariah, relate happenings to the reigns of the Persian kings, Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes (Ahasuerus). See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Macropaedia*, vols. XIV, p. 951, and XXII, p. 448.

[85] See e.g. Strabo, *Geography*, vol. V, map XI at end.

[86] Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, pp. 2, 66, 71–2; Frye, *History of Ancient Iran*, pp. 65, 70–2, 76–80.

[87] For Kazembek, see Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 51–2, 248 n. 1.

[88] M. Kazem-Bek, ‘O yazyke i literature persov do islama’, Central State Archive of the Tatar ASSR, fond 1186, delo 13,

p. 29, cited in A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 16, from A. K. Rzayev, *Azerbaydzhanskiye vostokovedy XIX veka*, Baku, 1986, pp. 194–5.

[89] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 13, 17, 47–51.

[90] I. M. Dyakonov, *Istoriya Midii ot drevneyshikh vremyon do kontsa IV veka do n.e.*, Moscow, 1956, p. 116, quoted by A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 7–19, 23–4.

[91] Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaidzhana*, p. 61.

[92] The name of the founder of this short-lived dynasty has various spellings. In Guliyev's book it is 'Eldegiz'; others use 'Eldegüz', 'Ildegiz' or 'Il-Deniz', from Turkic *el* or *il* 'tribe, people' and *däniz* 'sea, ocean', associated with the name Chingiz Khan: Z. M. Buniyatov, *Gosudarstvo atabekov Azerbaydzhana (1136–1225 gody)*, Baku, 1978, p. 44 n. 1.

[93] Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaidzhana*, p. 61.

[94] See, for instance, the characteristic features of a nation-state, and their frequent imperfections, in accounts of 'political systems' and 'sphere of influence' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edn, *Micropedia*, vol. VI, p. 311; *Macropaedia*, vol. XXV, p. 1007.

[95] N. M. Velikhanly in Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 10, 209–12, 215–20.

[96] In Russian: Buniyatov, *Gosudarstvo atabekov*.

[97] Lambton, 'Internal structure', p. 203.

[98] The Turkic word *beg/bek* 'chief, ruler, lord' is better known in its modern form *bey* 'gentleman', 'Mr'.

[99] Bosworth, 'Political and dynastic history', pp. 56, 67–8, 76.

[100] From the Arabic root ??? qṭ^{c} 'to cut'.

[101] C. Cahen, 'Ikṭā^{c}', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. V, pp. 1088–91; Cahen, 'Tribes', pp. 311–13; Lambton, 'Internal structure', pp. 218, 231–2; I. P. Petrushevsky, 'The socio-economic condition of Iran under the Il-Khāns', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, p. 499 n. 1.

[102] Lambton, 'Internal structure', pp. 237–9.

[103] Cahen, 'Ikṭā^{c}', pp. 1088–9.

[104] C. Cahen, 'Atabak', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 731.

[105] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 210–11; C. Cahen, 'Arminiya', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 637; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 187–8; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 124. There has been difficulty about establishing the regnal years and epithets of the numerous kings of both Armenia and Georgia named Ashot, as well as other rulers: see lists in Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', pp. 781–2, and some of the argument in Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 346–54, 537–8.

[106] Madelung, 'Minor dynasties', pp. 236–7; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 127; Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 200.

[107] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 9, 139–40; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, pp. 60–4.

[108] Hübschmann, 'Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen', map 40.5N, 43E; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 140; Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', p. 624.

[109] 'Anatolia', the Greek name preceding the Latin 'Asia Minor', is ανατολή 'rising', especially of the sun, hence 'the East'.

[110] Strabo, *Geography*, map X; Turan, 'Anatolia', p. 232.

[111] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, pp. 72–3; Taeschner, 'Turks and the Byzantine Empire', pp. 743–4.

[112] Taeschner, 'Turks and the Byzantine Empire', pp. 739, 741, 743–5, 744–5, 747–8; Turan, 'Anatolia', pp. 233–4.

[113] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, pp. 106–13, 121–71.

[114] It has been estimated that between 60,000 and 100,000 people, combatants and non-combatants, from western Europe entered the Byzantine Empire to join the Crusade from summer 1096 to spring 1097: Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, p. 169.

[115] *Ibid*., vol. I; vol. II, pp. 8–14, 57–61, 65, 68–70, 109, 145, 175–94, 189, 213–62, 279–95.

[116] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 142–5, 149–54, 230–1, 239–40, 249; vol. II, pp. 18–25, 35, 206, 240.

[117] *Ibid*., vol. II, pp. 211–13.

[118] Here the name ‘Franks’ is used in the sense in which, in its Persian form *Färängī*, anglicized as *Feringhee*, it has been applied from the tenth century in Arabic (*al-Ifranjī*), Persian and Turkish and as far afield as India, in referring to European people or Christians: H. Yule and C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: the Anglo-Indian Dictionary*, 2nd edn, London, 1902 [facsimile reprint, 1996], pp. 352–4.

[119] Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, pp. 126–7; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. II, pp. 50–1, 214–24.

[120] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. II, p. 8.

[121] *Ibid*., vol. II, pp. 203–5, 220, 225, 227–8, 233–9.

[122] *Ibid*., vol. II, pp. 18–31, 247–9, 252–7, 259–63; R. N. Frye, ‘Preface’ in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. IV, p. xi.

[123] *Ibid*., vol. II, pp. 234, 238, 247–86.

[124] *Ibid*., vol. III, pp. 5–9, 13–17, 42–75, 411–21.

[125] *Ibid*., vol. III, p. 335.

4 The later Crusades, Mongols and Ottoman Turks, the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries

Georgia and the Crusades

The two Christian states in the Caucasus could not become involved in the Crusades as those of western Europe did. Caucasians lived relatively near Baghdad and Jerusalem, in the shadow of *Dār al-Islām* (the 'abode of Islam', the region in which Islamic law prevails). Their own land lay in *Dār al-ḥarb* (the 'abode of war' – all the rest of the world – 'against which warfare for the propagation of the faith [*jihād*] is licit' (indeed, according to the Koran, where killing non-believers is *obligatory*).[1] The Caucasus had experienced the direct effects of the Muslims' commitment to war since the seventh century, and 400 years later Armenia was almost wiped out by the Seljuqs' violent assault in the cause of *jihad*, while many Georgians, already partly conquered in its name and with Tiflis comandeered as the caliph's Caucasus headquarters, were obliged to convert to Islam – superficially at least.

Georgians, in their mountain strongholds to the north, were fully aware of the Christian–Muslim war, and made their own contribution to it. Georgia had been converted to Christianity as early as Armenia and, as a subject in turn of Persia with its 'stratified feudalism' and of the Roman and Byzantine Empires with their 'privileged aristocracies', was itself by the eleventh century a hierarchical state possessing many features typical of European feudalism.[2] Christianity, first preached in Georgia by a woman, St Nino, was adopted as the state religion by King Mirian III around AD 334, under the authority of the patriarch of Antioch. King Vakhtang I Gorgasali or Gurgaslani[3] (447–522), after his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, persuaded the patriarch in Constantinople to allow Iberia's senior clergy to be Georgians rather than Greeks. By then, it was said, the Georgians were the most zealous of the Eastern Christians, and missionaries from Antioch founded a number of monasteries in Iberia. Later, Georgia's south-western region of Tao-Klarjeti founded monasteries in Jerusalem (the monastery of the Holy Cross), at Kurus in Syria, on Mount Athos in Greece, and in Bulgaria, so that Georgia had regular contacts with several Orthodox Christian centres in the Near East.[4] The most prestigious institutions of Georgian monasticism were on Antioch's Black Mountain, and there were several monasteries on Mount Sinai, where in the tenth century the abbot, Ioane Zosim, wrote his ‘Eulogy and glorification of the Kartlian language’, one of the earliest patriotic works in Georgian.[5] Another pillar of Georgia's medieval religious-patriotic ideology which first emerged in Tao-Klarjeti was a spurious genealogy of the Bagratid kings claiming that their line originated with the biblical King David of Israel.[6]

The Georgian Church had its own altar in the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, as did all the churches of eastern rites, including the Greek Orthodox, the Armenians, Jacobites, Nestorians and Copts. An illustration of the arrogance of the Western Crusaders was their appointment as patriarch of Jerusalem in 1099 of a French chaplain who, with the approval of Duke Godefroi, ejected all Eastern Christian priests from the Holy Sepulchre and installed Europeans in their stead. In response to protests, the rights of all Christians were restored in 1101, but resentment persisted because all the higher clergy continued to be Frankish.[7]

From the seventh century Georgians chronicling the Islamic Arab conquest of their land adopted the same terms – 'Saracens' or 'Hagarenes' – as were used elsewhere in medieval Christendom to denote nomadic invaders. A later Georgian historian's words illustrate the traditional perceptions of these enemies who 'on the ferocious urging of the false prophet Muhammad, spreading into countries adjacent to Arabia, subjugated them all to the tyrannical power inspired by their turbulent religion'.[8] The Muslim conquerors also supplied Georgian folklore with a bogeyman invoked to instil fear in recalcitrant children – the late eighth century Caliph Marwan II, nicknamed in Georgian 'Murwan the Deaf' (*Murwan-Qru*) because of his indifference to appeals for mercy.[9] Georgian hagiography portrays the Muslims as enemies of Christianity, as in Ioane Sabanisdze's story of the martyrdom of Abu Tbileli, a Georgian nobleman's Arab servant who was tortured and killed for apostasizing to Christianity; and an account of the eighth-century King Archil who, despite his virtuous behaviour and peaceful relations with Muslims over many years, was beheaded for refusing to renounce Christianity.[10]

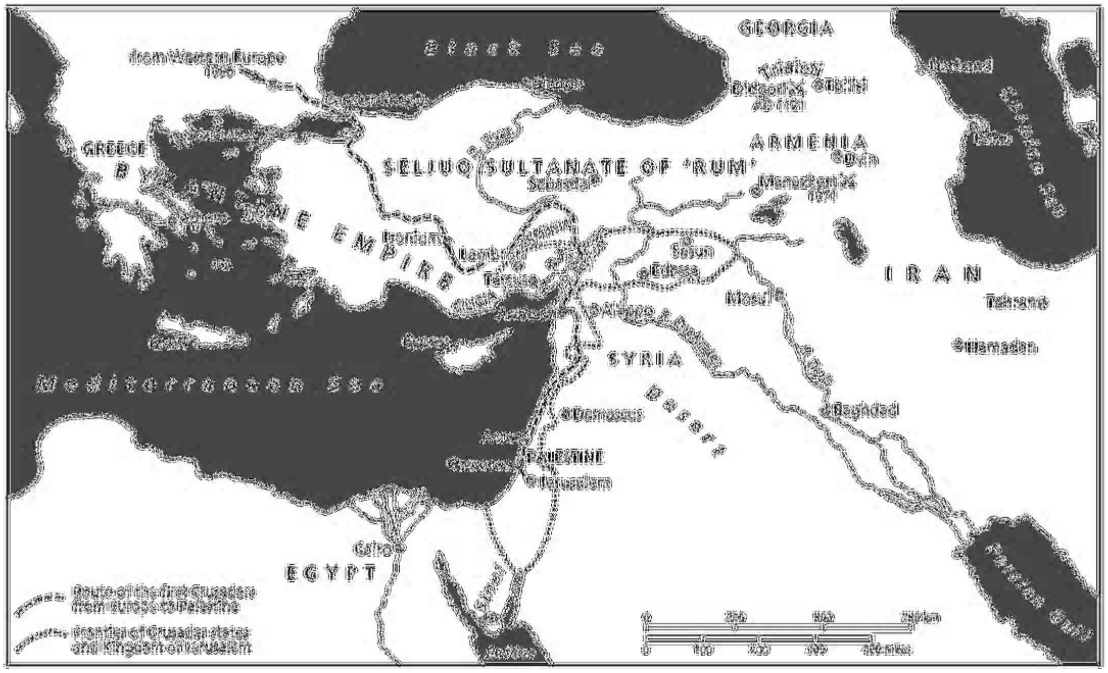
By the time of the Crusades the threat to Georgia's continuing existence came not from the Arabs, but the Seljuqs, against whom King Davit II[11] the Builder[12] (1089–1125) launched a long campaign in the late eleventh century (see Map 11). To start with, Davit's army consisted of his personal bodyguard of regular troops, and feudal levies mustered by the landowners. From the late 1080s he led these forces against the Seljuq occupiers and regained overall control of his kingdom of Kartli. However, the liberation of the other Georgian principalities in the early twelfth century required radical reorganization of the Kartlian army, making its core a personal force of 20,000 Georgian warriors and 40,000 Kypchak Turks recruited from the North Caucasus steppes, and led by Otrok, the father of Davit's Kypchak wife. The Kypchaks (in Russian ‘Polovtsians’) were brought south despite the resistance of Georgia's northern neighbours, the Osetians. Their pay was the loot they seized during raids carried out for King Davit. In addition to Kypchaks he recruited mercenaries from Osetia, Daghestan and Kurdistan. Between 1101 and 1121 Davit's army drove the Seljuqs out of Ḳakheti, Hereti and Ṭao, and Georgia no longer paid tribute to them.[13] According to one historian,

> so disturbing did [Davit's]…successes become to the Seljuk rulers that in 1121 something approaching a *jihad* was proclaimed against the Georgians. A levy was made of all the Mussulman emirates between Ganja and Aleppo, and Ilghazi-bin-Otrok, the ruler of Aleppo…commanded the great host which in August of that year invaded Trialeti. But the confederate emirs were utterly routed.[14]

The final triumph was Davit's victory at Didgori and the regaining of the caliph's Caucasian headquarters, Tiflis, as the Georgian capital Tbilisi, as well as other Georgian and Armenian territory. A historian of the Crusades notes that, thanks to these decisive victories, ‘[h]enceforward the whole Turkish world was desperately conscious of the danger that Georgia, with its superb strategic position, presented to them.’ Consequently, ‘[t]he only Christian state in the East that commanded respect among the Moslems was the…

kingdom of Georgia.' The Crusaders were aware of this, and the prowess of Davit the Builder and his successors, 'by keeping the Moslems perpetually nervous of their northern flank, was of great value to the Franks'.

Runciman, who heads his account of King Davit '1121: the Georgian Crusade', found that 'there seems to have been no direct contact between the two Christian powers' – the Crusaders and the Georgians. The latter, indeed, 'bound by links of religion and tradition to Byzantium, had no liking for the Franks; and the chilly treatment accorded to…[Georgian] religious establishments at Jerusalem was not such as would please a proud people'.[15] Another indication of the Georgians' awareness of the Crusades is the comment by the historian of King Davit that 'At this time the Franks took the field; they captured Jerusalem and Antioch, and by God's help the land of Kartli gained strength, King Davit's power increased and his warriors' numbers grew, and he no longer paid tribute to the sultan, nor did the Turks thereafter make winter camp in Kartli.'[16] Another historian quotes a description by a contemporary Catholic patriarch of Jerusalem of 'Georgian knights and pilgrims who used to visit the Holy City…"with banners displayed, without paying tribute to anyone…These men…especially revere and worship Saint George…[as] their patron and standard-bearer in their fight with the infidels."'[17] More unexpected is the statement by a leading Georgian historian that when, during Davit the Builder's campaigns in Shirvan, the reputedly invincible Seljuqs were annihilated at the battle of Didgori (1121), '[t]he Georgian army included a detachment of 1,000 west European Crusaders.' (Another Georgian historian puts the number of Crusaders in this campaign at only 200.)[18]


GEORGIA
Black Sea
from Western Europe
Tbilisi
ARMENIA
GREECE
SELJUQ SULTANATE OF 'RUM'
Sebastia
Manazkert
1071
BYZANTINE EMPIRE
Iconium
Sasun
Edessa
Tarsus
IRAN
Mosul
Tehran
Hamadan
SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea
Desert
Baghdad
Damascus
PALESTINE
Jerusalem
Cairo
EGYPT
Sinai
Persian Gulf
Caspian Sea
Route of the first Crusaders from Europe to Palestine
Frontier of Crusader states and Kingdom of Jerusalem

Map 11 Armenia, Georgia and the Byzantine Empire face the Seljuq Turk invasion; Western Crusaders enter Syria and Palestine.

Perhaps the most significant contrast between the general attitudes of west European and Georgian historians to the Crusades is that, while

> The rise of Christ's warriors and the success of the Crusaders in the Near East favoured David the Builder's policy…[in] their turn the Georgian King's successful campaigning against the Seljuq Turks was advantageous for the Crusaders…The actions of the Crusaders and the Georgians, [although] quite independent of each other, were mutually beneficial. Nevertheless their aims differed considerably. The Crusaders' true intentions, masked by the pious aim of 'liberating the Lord's tomb from the grip of the infidels', did not remain a secret for long. They slaughtered the population of the East and grabbed

> rich booty, spilling even Christian blood without hesitation. It was not impossible that, if it suited them, they might invade Georgia too…Consequently, the Georgians and the Crusaders could not share the same aims. For the Georgian people the enemy was not Islam as such, but the Seljuq Turks, who aimed to enslave Georgia and physically destroy its population – they were fighting for their nation's self-preservation. David the Builder, who was called in the East 'the defender of Christianity', 'the sword of the Messiah', maintained a sympathetic policy toward the Muslims…and had close relations with the Muslim world, as Georgia's domestic situation and geographical location demanded.[19]

Many reports circulated of personal contacts between King Davit and the Crusaders, and even of his participation in events in Jerusalem, but these remain apocryphal.[20]

Armenia at the time of the Crusades

The Georgians, accustomed to withdrawing into the refuge of their homeland's rugged mountains, adopted ways of conforming but keeping their culture alive and ready to be reaffirmed whenever conditions permitted, but for Armenians in their more exposed plateau environment, and isolated culturally from both Byzantium and Georgia by differences of theology, survival meant fleeing elsewhere. From 1048 onward Armenia suffered repeated ravaging by the Seljuqs, leading to its practical extinction as a state. Its national culture, however, survived, producing the oral epic *Davit of Sasun*, the poetry of Grigor Narekatsi and Nerses Shnorhali, and many historical writings. Indeed, the

Armenians, despite subjugation by Greeks, Arabs and Turks, showed themselves to be resilient and enterprising under any circumstances, and had many contacts with foreign lands, where they formed a large diaspora. Between the eighth and tenth centuries at least nine Armenians were emperors in Constantinople, and many others generals in the Byzantine army. Others made careers in the service of Islam, including ^{c}Ali al-Armani, the emir of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the ninth century. Later Egyptian armies also included many Armenians (formally slaves) one of whom, Badr al-Jamali, became the first of several Armenian viziers in Cairo. From the eleventh century there was an Armenian community in eastern Europe, as thousands fled from the Seljuqs via Crimea and Ukraine, and entered the service of the Galician princes fighting the Kypchaks. For instance, Armenians were among the earliest citizens of Lvov, first under Eastern Slav, then Polish rule, and a Gregorian diocese was founded there in 1367. The Armenian community in Poland was notable not only for its prowess in war (many fought against the Teutonic Knights) but also as merchant intermediaries between Europe, the Middle East and India, attaining considerable prosperity and a high level of education.[21]

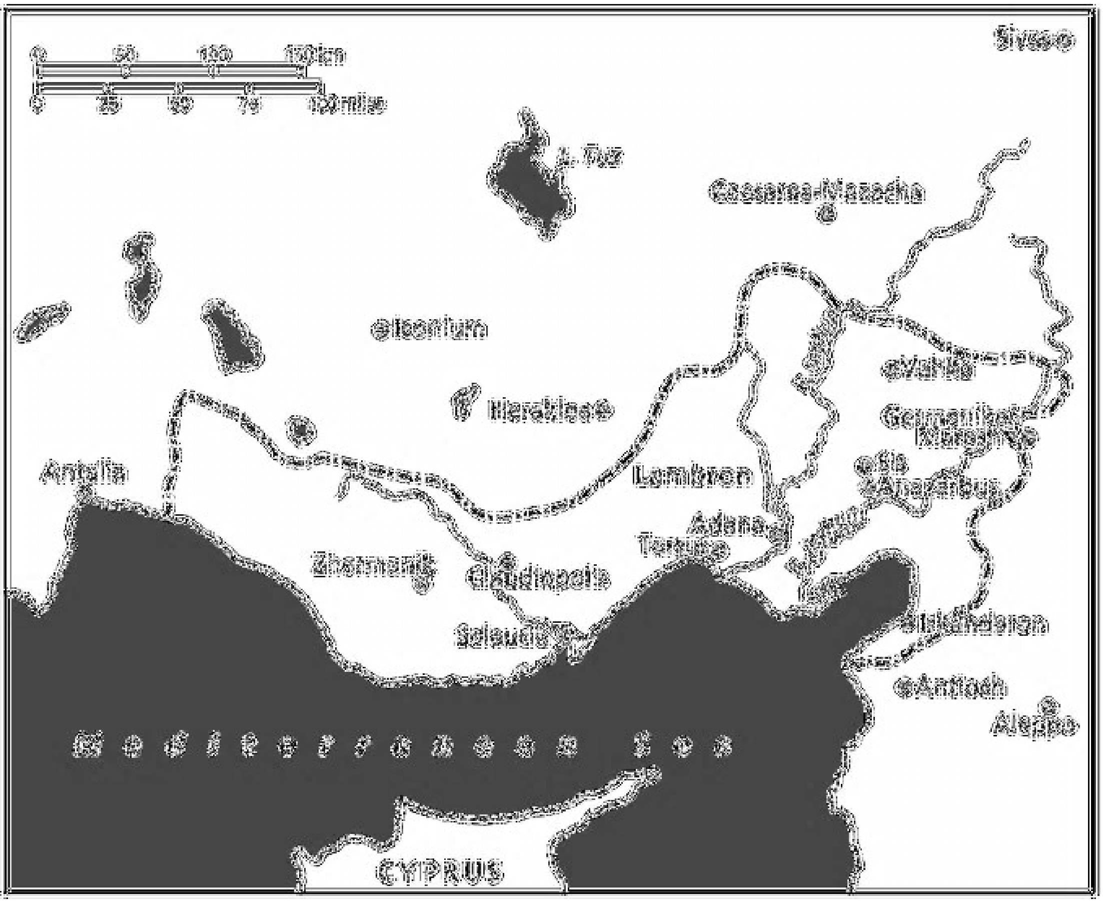
Driven from their homeland around Lake Van, many of the Armenians who escaped death at the hands of the Seljuq Turks or from starvation in their devastated land established a new home in Cilicia (Kilikia), a region of Anatolia lying some 300 miles to the south-west. Its original population, including Hittites and Phrygians, had been ousted or absorbed by Greek seafarers and settlers, and Armenians started settling in Cilicia in the first century BC at the time of King Tigran the Great's Armenian Empire. Cilicia occupies a strategic situation in the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean (see Map 12). Here the rivers Seyhun and

Jeyhun carry down from the Taurus Mountains great quantities of silt, creating a delta which now extends far beyond the once coastal towns of Anarzaba, Tarsus and Mamistra. For a time part of Syria came within Armenia's borders, and Antioch was its capital until Tigran the Great built his new city on the upper Tigris. As we have seen, he did not enjoy his imperial power for long: from 69 BC he was at war with the Romans, and Armenia became a vassal kingdom of Rome until AD 364, when most of it was annexed by Sasanid Persia. Cilicia, however, remained within the Byzantine Empire, and it has been said that:

> The amazing resilience of the Armenian people is nowhere better illustrated than in the saga of Cilician Armenia…Much of it is rugged mountainous country, formed by the spurs of the Taurus, which often terminate in rocky headlands with small sheltered harbours…From the military and political point of view, control of Cilicia was vital for free communication between Asia Minor and Syria, since the…Cilician Gates running through a narrow, rocky pass provided the most convenient…practicable route from Constantinople…to the great cities of Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia.[22]

With the rise of Islam, Cilicia found itself on the frontier between Byzantium, the metropolis of Christianity, and the lands of Palestine and Mesopotamia occupied by the Arabs. Just to the east lay Syria, with three important cities – Antioch, Edessa and Aleppo – which were not only a focus of Christian–Muslim conflict but, like Byzantium, a hotbed of theological wranglings between competing confessions of Christianity. These included not only Greek Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Monophysitism, but also the church of Nestorius, a Syrian patriarch who during the fifth century developed yet another variant. Nestorius gained a big following, but when a church council in 431 condemned his beliefs as heretical, most Nestorians moved north through Persia into Central Asia. One result of these theological conflicts was that in the thirteenth century the centre of Near Eastern Christianity, Antioch, harboured three patriarchs – of the Greek Orthodox, Nestorian and Jacobite Churches. In addition, Armenian Christians, both Gregorian and Orthodox, were present, as were Roman Catholic Crusaders.[23]

Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963–9) had anticipated the Crusades by campaigns against the Muslims in Cyprus and Syria, culminating in the capture of Antioch and Aleppo. His endeavour was continued by John I Tzimisces, who opposed the Fatimid Egyptians' advance into Palestine and regained Edessa and northern Syria.[24] Cilicia – conquered by the Muslims in the seventh century and largely depopulated thereafter – was also regained by Nicephorus and gradually occupied by Armenian refugees. Like their compatriots remaining in Sasun, Aghtamar, Vanand, Syunik and Lori, who continued to resist the Seljuqs, the Armenians in Cilicia were patriotic and warlike. Some of them became hereditary landowners of considerable territories, and in the 1070s one of these new Armenian lords, Philaretus Brachamius (Armenian 'Vahrām'), organized an independent state, briefly uniting much of Cilicia and neighbouring districts, including Tarsus, Lambron, Edessa, and even Antioch, as a kind of 'Armenia-in-exile'. However, in 1085 Antioch was stormed by the Seljuqs, and other components fell away to the Crusaders, until the only independent nucleus of Armenian power left was the castle of Bardzrberd, where the anti-Byzantine Armenian lord Ruben established himself in a mountainous district on a tributary of the Seyhun.[25] The Rubenids thus became the ruling family of eastern or upper Cilicia, but at times also possessed lower Cilicia with Tarsus and other towns. Economically Cilicia enjoyed good conditions, with both mountain pastures and fertile lowlands where grapes, olives, sesame and cotton were cultivated. Many crafts flourished, producing carpets and woollen, linen and cotton textiles, and metal wares were made from locally mined gold, silver, lead and copper, so that Cilician Armenians participated in trade with Byzantium, the Black Sea ports, Syria, Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, Persia and India.[26]


0 50 100 150km
0 25 50 75 100 miles
Sivas
L. Tuz
Caesarea-Mazacha
Iconium
Herakleia
Antalia
Lombron
Adana
Tarsus
Claudiopolis
Seleucia
Vahka
Germanikeia
Marash
Sis
Anazarbus
Iskenderun
Antioch
Aleppo
Mediterranean Sea
CYPRUS

Map 12 Cilicia: the Armenian state in Asia Minor in the eleventh–fourteenth centuries.

The welcome extended to the first Crusaders by the Armenians established a lasting ‘Armeno-Latin entente’ – sometimes in opposition to the Byzantine emperor – but even this alliance was subject to friction between the Armenians and the Crusader leadership, especially the ruthlessly ambitious Norman knights whose fathers had founded a small empire in the eleventh century by expelling the Greeks from southern Italy and the Arabs from Sicily, and were now imposing themselves as rulers in Antioch.[27] A similar local conflict occurred in 1133 when a fortress on the Antioch border was seized by the Armenian prince Levon I. This provoked swift retribution from Emperor John II, who reclaimed upper Cilicia and imprisoned Levon. The latter soon died in captivity, but his second son, Toros II (1145–69), escaped and resumed the fight for independence. A punitive expedition launched by Emperor Manuel was defeated, but Toros made matters worse by allying himself with the French knight Reynald of Châtillon for a plundering expedition to Cyprus (a Byzantine possession) in 1156–7. The emperor again marched to Cilicia and resubjected Reynald and Toros. Toros was pardoned, but was confirmed as ruler of only upper Cilicia under Byzantine suzerainty. The Armenians were thus deprived of the coastal towns, and failed in their attempts to regain them.[28] On Toros's death in 1169 his uncle, Mleh (a Knight Templar, now converted to Islam and an enemy of the Crusaders), occupied upper Cilicia in alliance with the Muslim ruler of Aleppo and Damascus, Nur ad-Din. After the Seljuq victory over the Greeks at Myriocephalum in 1176 all of Armenian Cilicia was reunited under Ruben III, including the principality of Lambron (ruled by Hetum) in lowland Cilicia. Ruben's personal triumph was cut short by the treachery of the Norman prince Bohemond III of Antioch, whose marriage to a courtesan who spied for the Muslims evoked the wrath of the patriarch. As civil war appeared imminent, many Armenian nobles moved out of Antioch to Ruben III's court at Sis, but Bohemond captured Ruben, and tried to annex his Cilician towns of Mamistra and Adana.

Thereafter Ruben was rescued by his brother Levon, and when Ruben retired to a monastery he succeeded as Levon II.[29] The latter's reign (1186–1219) coincided with a time of increased Islamic activity stimulated by the foundation in Egypt of the Ayyubid dynasty by Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin), who reigned as sultan 1175–93. Most of Levon's energy, however, was directed not at fighting the Saracens, but on securing his Armenian kingdom against domination on the one hand by Byzantium and on the other by the Crusaders. Antioch was a particular bone of contention between him and the city's current ruler (and Levon's acknowledged suzerain) Bohemond III[30] – an arrogant schemer who aimed to thwart Levon II's ambition of annexing Antioch to Cilicia. After the Knight Templars' fortress of Baghras, commanding the pass north of Antioch, was demolished by Saladin in 1191, it was quickly retaken and occupied by Levon, and he refused to relinquish it to the Templars as Bohemond demanded. Angered by Bohemond's appeal to Saladin for help, Levon tricked the prince into bringing his family to Baghras castle as his guests, and imprisoned them there until Bohemond surrendered to Levon his authority over Antioch.

In preparation for the takeover, Armenian soldiers under Hetum of Sasun arrived in the city and were welcomed by its barons, many of whom were of Armenian descent. However, both the Greek townspeople and the Frankish occupiers were prejudiced against Armenians, and a riot against the 'barbarous mountaineers' forced the Armenians to leave Antioch. The Roman Catholic patriarch, with the collusion of the city's Italian merchants, then formed an administrative commune, from which Armenians were excluded. Meanwhile Levon II withdrew to Sis, taking his captive, Bohemond, with him, until 1194 when, through the mediation of Count Henri of Champagne (consort of the Crusaders' Queen Isabella of Jerusalem), Levon, confirmed in his possession of Baghras, agreed to release Bohemond, on the understanding that neither of them would be suzerain over the other. To seal the pact, a marriage was arranged between Bohemond III's son and Ruben III's daughter, Alice – despite the fact that she was already married to Hetum of Sasun.[31]

Levon II craved a king's crown and, as this would never be provided by the Byzantines, he decided to appeal to European monarchs. The pope ignored his request, but he succeeded with the German emperor Friedrich I Barbarossa, and his successor Heinrich VI. As a result, in 1198 at Tarsus Levon II was crowned king of Armenia jointly by a German cardinal and the Armenian catholicos. 'It was a great day for the Armenians, who saw in it a revival of [their] ancient kingdom', but it could not help those in Great Armenia, from whom the Cilicians were separated by the Seljuqs – and even the Cilician Armenians found that they gained very little from their Western contacts.[32] In other respects, however, Levon II's pro-European bias did bring benefits to Cilicia: he promoted industry and commerce and introduced governmental and judicial reforms which politically 'constitutionalised the change of the basically dynastic Caucasian structure of [Armenian] society into a Western, purely feudal one'. What did cause resentment in his realm (in effect a colony, remote from Armenia proper, with a population consisting entirely of recent settlers) was that Levon favoured the return of the Armenian Church to Chalcedonian doctrine, implying abolition of the Gregorian Apostolic Church, and Armenia's subjection to Rome.[33]

Nevertheless, under Levon II and his successor, Hetum I of Lambron (1226–69), ‘Armenia in exile reached the summit of power and prosperity: it became a kingdom and played a decisive role in world politics and international commerce… due to the administrative genius, military prowess, diplomatic skill, and above all grandiose political vision of these two monarchs’, including trading agreements with Venice and Genoa, and the development of Armenia's own merchant fleet.[34]

Thus Anatolia in the early thirteenth century was divided between several states: the ‘Empire of Nicaea’, a remnant of Byzantium, occupying the westernmost part of the peninsula; the west European ‘Latin Empire’ holding the Straits and much of mainland Greece; the many ports and islands of the Aegean that had been seized by Venice. The Greeks retained the north coast from Nicaea to Trebizond, but the centre and east of Anatolia was still the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum. The Crusades continued, but their bridgeheads in Palestine and Syria were hemmed in along the Mediterranean coast by a lobe of the Egyptian sultanate extending north to the Euphrates. Meanwhile the situation in Anatolia was becoming more complex as new threats appeared from the East.

The Mongols in the Middle East and the Caucasus

The thirteenth century brought to Persia another wave of nomadic invasion originating from Inner Asia where, about 1206, Temujin, the son of a Mongolian chieftain in the Amur region, had gathered several local tribes and combined them into such an efficient fighting force that the Mongols called him the supreme lord of the world – metaphorically ‘Ocean Ruler’, ‘Chingis Khan’. His first step towards justifying this ambitious title was to lead his Mongols, and neighbouring tribes called ‘Tatars’, on a campaign in 1211 which subjugated northern China. Thus Asia's new conquering hordes originated near eastern Siberia, beyond the Turkic homeland on the Orkhon – and some 2,000 miles from Persia's Amu Darya frontier. The intervening plains, however, were criss-crossed by trade routes and cultural corridors along which much information about the world, as well as various religions, had percolated east and west. Chingis himself was an Animist, believing in the powers of shamans, but around him were Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Muslims among the Uighur Turks of Tarim and Turfan, and Nestorian Christians as far north as Lake Baykal. As Chingis Khan's great host advanced westwards in 1218 various tribes, some Buddhist, others Muslim, submitted and joined it,[35] and, like the Turks who had migrated into Central Asia 500 years before, many of the Animists yielded to the Islam prevailing in and around Persia. Among Mongols who became Muslims within the first half-century of their arrival was Berke Khan, but mass conversion did not begin until the reign of Özbeg (1313–41), when Central Asia divided into the Islamic south-west (Transoxania) and the Mongolian Mogholistan in the north-east, south of Lake Balkhash, where Islam gained little influence.[36]

The Mongols resembled the Muslim Arabs in having convinced themselves of their own uniquely important role in history. In the case of the Arabs their religious leaders, the ᶜAbbasid caliphs, ‘claimed…that they received their authority by divine mandate and not by the agreement of men’, and on this basis were destined ‘to create…a universal Islamic empire’.[37] Similarly the Mongol leader five centuries later informed the people of Central Asia that not only was he God's punishment sent to chastise them for their sins, but that the Mongols ‘were destined by divine will to be the rulers of the world’. The apocalyptic claims of these two world-conquering powers are intertwined in the invocation to a Persian account of Chingis Khan's conquests: ‘In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate…[He] is the Avenger, and the glittering sword of the Tatar…[is] the instrument of His severity.’[38]

Just as Islam was a ‘revealed religion’, so the beliefs that inspired the Mongols had supposedly come from a man who

> [in winter] used to walk naked through the desert and the mountains and then to return and say: ‘God has spoken with me and has said: “I have given all the face of the earth to Temujin and his children and named him Chinggiz Khan. Bid him administer justice in such and such a fashion.”’ They called this person Teb-Tengri [Most Heavenly], and whatever he said Chinggiz Khan used implicitly to follow.[39]

On one point Mongol-Turkic and Islamic beliefs differed diametrically: for the Mongols the universal religious belief was Animism, which attributed spirit or deity to every phenomenon in nature, and personified these as many gods under the supreme sky-god Tengri. Such beliefs (general also among pre-Islamic Arabs and their neighbours) were denounced by Muhammad as so evil that it was the Muslim's duty to exterminate their adherents, the polytheists or Animists, wherever they found them.[40]

However much their religious beliefs differed, the Arabs and Mongols resembled each other in being convinced of their own rightness in imposing their beliefs on all other peoples, and the stark ultimatum they presented to those they conquered: submit to us and our ideology, which comes from God – or you will be killed or at best enslaved. Aiming equally to enforce total obedience, the Arabs imposed a comprehensive (if unsystematic) body of rules covering every aspect of life, embodied in a single manual, the Koran, while Chingis Khan framed his vision of utopia in terms of the khan administering good government for his subjects, organized like an army in multiples of ten, each under an officer to ensure strict discipline.[41]

Any narrative of the first incursion into Central Asia and Persia by the Mongol army of some 150,000–200,000 mounted warriors under Chingis Khan's command is inevitably a sequence of cities surrounded and forced to submit to the inevitable. The first place attacked was Otrar in Khwarazm, whose governor, offended by Chingis's arrogant mode of addressing him in a letter, had seized a caravan travelling under a decree of safe conduct, and not only impounded its cargo and killed the accompanying merchants, but also killed envoys sent to him by Chingis Khan to protest. In autumn 1219 Otrar was subjected to a five-month siege, and its male inhabitants put to the sword or deported to work as craftsmen or serve in the front ranks in the Mongols' next siege; the fate of the women and children was slavery. Early in 1220 Chingis Khan advanced on Bukhara, where his use of ballistas and incendiary projectiles quickly induced surrender, and there was a forced levy of men to spearhead the assault on the next city, Samarkand – which, like it, was razed to the ground. The treatment meted out to city populations varied: Balkh offered to surrender, but because the Khwarazm-shah's army was fighting nearby, Chingis Khan had all the inhabitants killed and the city demolished. Tirmidh, north of Balkh, resisted, so the whole population was massacred; this was also the fate of Gurganj, near the lower Amu Darya, where each Mongol soldier was allotted twenty-four men to slaughter. In Khorasan responsibility for the subjugation was given to Chingis's youngest son Toluy, ‘who carried out the task with [great] thoroughness’. The most monstrous massacres took place at Marv, where, according to one authority, more than 1.3 million people were butchered, at a rate of 300–400 per Mongol soldier, and at Herat in 1221 where 1.6 million perished.[42]

After Chingis Khan's death in 1227 the Mongolian Empire was divided at the national *khurultay* (assembly) in accordance with his expressed will, being allocated as ‘countries’ or ‘populations’ (in Mongolian *ulses*) among his four sons as viceroys. The second-eldest surviving son, Ögäday, became Great Khan, with particular authority over central Mongolia; Batu of the ‘Golden Horde’ inherited the land between the Altay mountains and Moscow; and the eldest, Chaghatay, received Central Asia north of the Amu Darya. South of this, as Persia was still in turmoil, Ögäday allotted 30,000 troops to Chormaghun to complete its subjection. Having occupied Khorasan and re-established civil administration, with the aim of exacting tax from the population, Chormaghun in 1235 moved west to complete the subjugation of upper Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and the Caucasus. Azerbaijan, Armenia and Aran were devastated, and their rulers forced to pay tribute to Ögäday Khan.[43] After the Mongols’ two Caucasus campaigns nearly all the most populous and flourishing cities of Azerbaijan (Maragha, Ardabil and Sarab), and Shirvan (Bailaqan, Shamakha, Ganja and Shamkhor) – were in ruins and most of their inhabitants dead; only by paying the khan enormous reparations had the Ildegüzid rulers saved their capital, Tabriz, from the same fate.[44] Subsequently Shirvan, with the shah's residence at

Baku, became important to the Mongol rulers as a winter residence and a source of mineral oil, salt and silk, until it regained its independence in the fourteenth century.

Khwarazm-shah Jalal ad-Din

In 1220 a narrow escape from capture by Chingis Khan in Khorasan made the Khwarazm-shah Muhammad ᶜAla’ ad-Din flee to the Caspian Sea, pursued by Generals Jebe and Sübödäy, and he died on Ashuradah island. His son, Jalal ad-Din, fled east to Ghazna, where he encountered and routed a pursuing Mongolian army – a unique success against them. However, Chingis himself took up the pursuit, leading a huge army from Khorasan, and lingering in Bamiyan to annihilate every living creature because his grandson had been killed there. The Mongols nearly caught Jalal ad-Din on the bank of the Indus, but he escaped, and remained in India for three years, until the Mongols withdrew to Mongolia, where Chingis Khan died in 1227.[45]

Meanwhile the armies of Sübödäy and Jebe, after sacking Khwarazm and Persia in 1220, had advanced north-west through Azerbaijan, where Atabeg Özbeg bought them off.[46] After wintering in the Mughan steppe, they went on to attack Georgia, where King Giorgi Lasha with an army of 90,000 mounted warriors defied the invaders in February 1221 at Khunani, 20 miles south of Tbilisi, but the Georgians, being unfamiliar with Mongol tactics, were routed. After making a swift excursion to Persia to suppress a rebellion, the Mongols returned in 1222, but the Georgians lay low, and the invaders, their eyes set on the north, contented themselves with pillaging Shirvan and Ganja, and quickly moved on to Darband. Even the Mongols could not readily sack this great fortress obstructing their passage along the

Caspian coast, and they were forced to take the difficult alternative route across the Daghestan mountains to the Terek steppes, where they scattered resistance by Alans and Kypchaks. In a more obscure engagement in the Don steppe, the Mongols encountered an army led by princes from Kievan Rus who, hearing reports about enigmatic newcomers near the Sea of Azov, 400 miles to the east, rode out to challenge them and were routed, with the loss, it is said, of 10,000 men. The Mongols' long reconnaissance continued via Crimea and southern Ukraine before heading back to the middle Volga and returning to Mongolia in 1224.[47] While the Mongols retreated to the north, Georgia's Queen Rusudan (1223–45) in Tbilisi corresponded with the pope about the possibility of participation in another crusade, scarcely referring to the recent Mongol visitation, as if it had been a trivial affair.[48]

Jalal ad-Din on his return from India in 1223 rebuilt his army for further campaigns in Persia, as well as replenishing his coffers by plundering. He was welcomed in Shiraz, Isfahan and Ray but, unable to take Baghdad from the Egyptians, overran Azerbaijan in 1225 and made Tabriz his base for further operations. In the Caucasus Jalal's campaigns were largely directed against the Georgians; he defeated their army at Garni and plundered Georgia ferociously for six years. In 1226, thanks to the treachery of Tbilisi's Persian residents, the Khwarazmians sacked the city, from which Rusudan and her court fled to Imereti (western Georgia) and took up residence in Kutaisi.[49] Thus the Georgian kingdom, restricted to its western, Black Sea provinces, lost its status in Europe, being 'no longer of value as the north-east outpost of Christendom, nor as a power that could challenge the Moslem hold on Asia Minor'.[50]

As Jalal ad-Din had massacred the Christians in Tbilisi he enjoyed great prestige in the Muslim world, and threw himself into a further orgy of fighting. After an 800-mile foray to south-eastern Persia to discipline a rebellious vassal, he returned to besiege the Armenian cities of Ani and Kars, held by the Georgians, and stormed a third, Khlat, where his Turkmen followers' atrocities were so vicious that the Armenians rallied and expelled their tormentors. In 1227 the tables were also turned on Jalal at Tbilisi, when the Georgians themselves attacked and burned it.

As the task allotted to Chormaghun by Ögädäy was the annihilation of Jalal ad-Din, the following year brought a respite for the Georgians and Armenians, as Jalal hurried to Isfahan, where a Mongol attack was expected. When the encounter took place the Khwarazmian army was scattered and fled. Next year (1229), however, Jalal was back in Azerbaijan, ravaging the defenceless Armenians of the plateau, then turning on Georgia where, despite its having formed an alliance with the Rum Seljuqs and the Kypchaks, he isolated the Georgians and defeated them at Bolnisi. Returning to Armenia, he subjected Khlat to a winter siege before moving on to Manazkert. By then, however, the sultan of Rum, Kai-Qubad, and other Anatolian Turks had organized themselves to end Jalal's depredations. They drove him out just before news arrived that Ögädäy Khan had sent a Mongol army to complete the subjugation of Persia – which included the suppression of Jalal ad-Din. Deserted by his army, Jalal fled to Diyarbakr, where he was killed by Kurds in 1231.[51]

Anatolia: Greeks, Seljuqs and Mongols

From 1230s the Mongols were also thrusting westward into Anatolia, subjecting the Seljuqs and bringing the Mongol border up against that of the Byzantines.[52]

The Seljuq Sultanate of Rum had flourished under Kai-Qubad I (1219–37), who after his victory over Jalal ad-Din near Erzinjan made Queen Rusudan of Georgia his vassal and averted a Mongol attack by negotiating with Ögädäy Khan. Kai-Qubad's successor, Kai-Khusrau II, weathered a rebellion led by a Turkmen dervish, prophesying a new age in which the poor would triumph over their Seljuq oppressors.[53] A more serious threat appeared in 1242, when a Mongolian army under Baichu, including Mkhargrdzeli's Georgian corps, invaded Anatolia, sacking Erzurum and in 1243 defeating the Seljuqs (who also had a Georgian commander, Prince Sharvashidze of Abkhazia). Although the Mongols advanced into Rum as far as Caesarea, they had to withdraw temporarily because of the *khurultay* following Ögädäy's death. Thereafter the Rum Sultanate was riven by internecine strife between claimants to the throne, who petitioned one or other Mongol khan for his mandate to rule.

Thus Persia's Mongol rulers (Il-Khans) considered Rum too as a vassal to be pillaged for tribute, and Hülägü appointed an administrator – in practice an ‘atabeg’ who, while nominally serving two young princes, was *de facto* ruler of Anatolia for twenty years. Eventually the Seljuqs exploited the antagonism between the Egyptian Mamluks and the Persian Mongols, and drew Sultan Baybars of Egypt into an invasion of Anatolia in 1277, resulting in great losses on both sides, but confirming the subjection of Rum to the Mongols. After Baybars's return to Egypt, however, Hülägü's son Abagha invaded and subjugated the Seljuq Sultanate and imposed administration by Mongol officials, subjecting Rum more firmly to the Il-Khan.[54]

Meanwhile, amid anarchy in Rum a new centre of power emerged in the southern Taurus mountain region, in the form of a Turkmen chief known as Karaman. Despite intervention by the Il-Khan, which reduced the last sultan of Rum to a puppet, turmoil in Persia eventually allowed the Karaman Turks to cast off Mongol domination and expand to the west until they reached the frontier of Ottoman Turkey. In northern Anatolia, however, the Il-Khans maintained their power over the Turkmens by instituted a sultanate in Sivas which survived under Egyptian protection until 1340, but was finally seized by the Ottoman sultan Murad I in 1361.[55] Shortly before this the Il-Khan dynasty in Persia had also come to an end amid turmoil involving fifteen warring local dynasties, including the Jalayirids, the Black Sheep (*Qara-qoyunlu*) and White Sheep (*Aq-qoyunlu*) Turks. These would have to face the next whirlwind of world-conquering ambition: the bloody career of Timurlenk (Tamerlane).[56]

In western Asia the Mongols were gradually converted to Islam through contact with the peoples of Central Asia and Persia. (Buddhism was not widely adopted in Mongolia until the sixteenth century.)[57] The first khan to desert Animism for Islam was Berke of the Golden Horde (1256–67), but it was not until 1313 that Khan Özbeg's accession brought the lasting imposition of Islam. Before that the Mongol leaders had shown tolerance, or indifference, towards religions, but thereafter they adopted the intolerance of Sunnite Islam. Meanwhile in Persia the Buddhist khan Arghun was succeeded by Ghazan, who in 1295, adopting the Arabic name Maḥmud and the title ‘sultan’, proclaimed Sunnism as the state religion. Nine years later, however, his successor

Öljäitü (originally baptized ‘Nicholas’ as a Nestorian Christian) changed to Buddhism, then to Sunni Islam. In 1310, however, he decided upon Shi^{c}ism only to revert later to Sunni orthodoxy. In Transoxania it was a khan with the Tibetan Sanskrit name Dharma Shri (Persianized as ‘Tarmashīrīn’, 1326–34) who on behalf of his people renounced Buddhism for Sunnism and became known as Sultan ^{c}Ala’ ad-Din.[58] (The fourteenth-century Arab geographer Muhammad Ibn Baṭṭuṭa records that a certain amount of verbal trickery was used by Muslim clerics to persuade unsophisticated Mongol chiefs to adopt Islam.)[59]

The unity of Chingis Khan's empire did not survive long, despite the calling of an all-Mongol *khurultay* whenever a Great Khan died. As mentioned above, Chingis had shared out among his sons responsibility for the government of the Mongol Empire before his death,[60] but further expansion led to a reallocation of imperial territories half a century later.[61] While Möngkä, Chingis's senior grandson, assumed the throne as Great Khan (1251–9) and inherited the Mongolian homeland in the east, after Möngkä's death Khubilay became ruler of northern China, and Batu retained the Golden Horde. Chaghatay *uls*, west of Mongolia proper, from the T’ian Shan to the Aral Sea, was ruled after Chaghatay's death by Qara Hülagü (1242–6); and to the south of this, Persia and the Caucasus came under Hülagü (1256–65), often called the ‘Il-Khan’.[62] The principal tasks allotted to the latter were the suppression of the Kurds and the Lurs (always considered troublesome by established governments) and, above all, the destruction of the Isma^{c}ilis and their castles, because their recently expressed ambition to conquer the world conflicted directly with the Mongols’ conviction that this was *their* exclusive ‘destiny’.[63] As Hülagü advanced south through Khorasan he was attacked by the Ismaᶜilis, and in retaliation the Mongols sacked the town of Tun and killed all its inhabitants except young women and craftsmen, who were deported. In 1256 Hülagü stormed the Ismaᶜilis' numerous castles, including that of the Grand Master at Alamut, and survivors all were eventually slaughtered in accordance with Chingis Khan's decree.[64]

By then everything south of the Amu Darya, from the Indus to Anatolia, had in Mongol eyes become Hülägü's *ulus*. His next victim was the ᶜAbbāsid caliphate.[65] After rejecting a conciliatory offer of voluntary tribute by Caliph al-Mustaᶜsim, Hülagü demanded sovereignty over the caliphate – which the caliph rejected – and the khan advanced on Baghdad. In January 1258 his army annihilated al-Mustaᶜsim's vanguard; Baghdad was invested, and held out for fifty days before the caliph surrendered and the Mongols entered the city, pillaging and massacring about 80,000 citizens, including the caliph and his sons.[66] Despite Hülagü's Mongol methods of devastation and wholesale slaughter, historical assessment has not been entirely negative:

> The achievements of Hülegü as a conqueror and empire-builder have not perhaps been fully appreciated…[H]e extended the Mongol conquests to the shores of the Mediterranean and left to his successors dominion…over…the greater part of what we now call the Middle East. It is, however, not for nothing that we speak of the Īl-Khāns of *Persia*…The Mongol was, in fact…Emperor of Iran…He and his successors created…the pre-conditions for a national state…and its rulers, for the first time since late

antiquity, entered into direct diplomatic relations with the West.[67]

Georgia and the Mongols

In Georgia Queen Rusudan, the sister of Giorgi IV, had returned to Tbilisi after the death of Jalal ad-Din, but her commander-in-chief, Awag Mkhargrdzeli, persuaded her to submit to the Mongols and escape once again to Kutaisi. Meanwhile, all of Georgia's ‘principal nobles, ignoring their allegiance to the queen, fortified themselves in their own strongholds and began to negotiate their submission’. After long experience of their Muslim neighbours (and frequently occupiers) both Arab and Turkish, it seems that ‘[t]he Georgians, once the atrocities of the conquest were over, much preferred [the Mongols] to the Khwarismians because of the efficiency of their administration…[and Queen Rusudan] became their vassal on the understanding that the whole Georgian kingdom was to be given to her son to rule under Mongol suzerainty.’[68] As a pledge of obedience the young crown prince, Davit, was handed over as a hostage and carried off to the capital of the Golden Horde at Saray on the lower Volga. There he remained until 1244, when he was transferred to the Great Khan's palace in Kharakhorum. The degree of Georgian submission to Mongol authority is indicated by the fact that soon Davit (V), the son of Rusudan, was joined in Mongolia by Davit (VI), the only son of Giorgi IV Lasha.[69]

In 1259, when Hülagü's viceroy Argun Aqa was in Aran organizing a census of the population for taxation purposes, the Mongols and their Muslim levies surrounded a Georgian rebel force, many of whom were taken prisoner. No doubt many of these captive warriors were persuaded to fight along with the Mongols, just as many Russian princes, also the khan's vassals, led their troops to war on the Mongol side. A contingent of Georgian horsemen participating in Hülagü's attack on Baghdad in 1258 showed themselves ‘eager to strike against the infidel capital’ and, as ‘the first to break through the walls, were particularly fierce in their destruction’ – thus qualifying for recognition as Crusaders. Similarly, in 1260 the Il-Khan's attack on the stronghold of the Ayyubid prince al-Kamil, who had defied him, was successful ‘largely thanks to…Hulagu's Georgian and Armenian allies’.[70] Other peoples were less favoured than the Christians: when Hülagü invaded Syria in 1259 he rode across Armenia, and in the mountains near Lake Van ‘there was great slaughter of the Kurdish inhabitants’ of the Khlat and Hakkari tribes.[71]

Meanwhile the Caucasian theatre of conflict widened, with raids from the north by the khan of the Golden Horde, while in the south Hülagü's occupation of Syria brought the Mongol state to the threshold of Egypt. In 1259, when Saif ad-Din Qudus seized power in Cairo as sultan, the Mongols demanded that he submit to them. The envoy bringing this message to Cairo was executed, and Qudus sent General Baybars to Ghaza to destroy its Mongol garrison. Because of the death in Mongolia of Great Khan Möngkä, Hülagü had withdrawn to Tabriz with his main force, leaving Syria under the command of the Nestorian Christian general Kit-Bugha. As the Crusaders had allowed Qudus to quarter troops in Acre, he was able to set a trap for the Mongol army with its Armenian and Georgian contingents. Decoyed into the hills where the Mamluks lay in wait, Kit-Bugha's army was annihilated – the first ever Mongol defeat in a pitched battle – and a few months later this defeat was repeated at Ḥimṣ.[72] These victories confirmed the status of the Egyptian

Mamluk sultanate as ‘the chief power in the Near East for the next two centuries, till the rise of the Ottoman Empire’.[73]

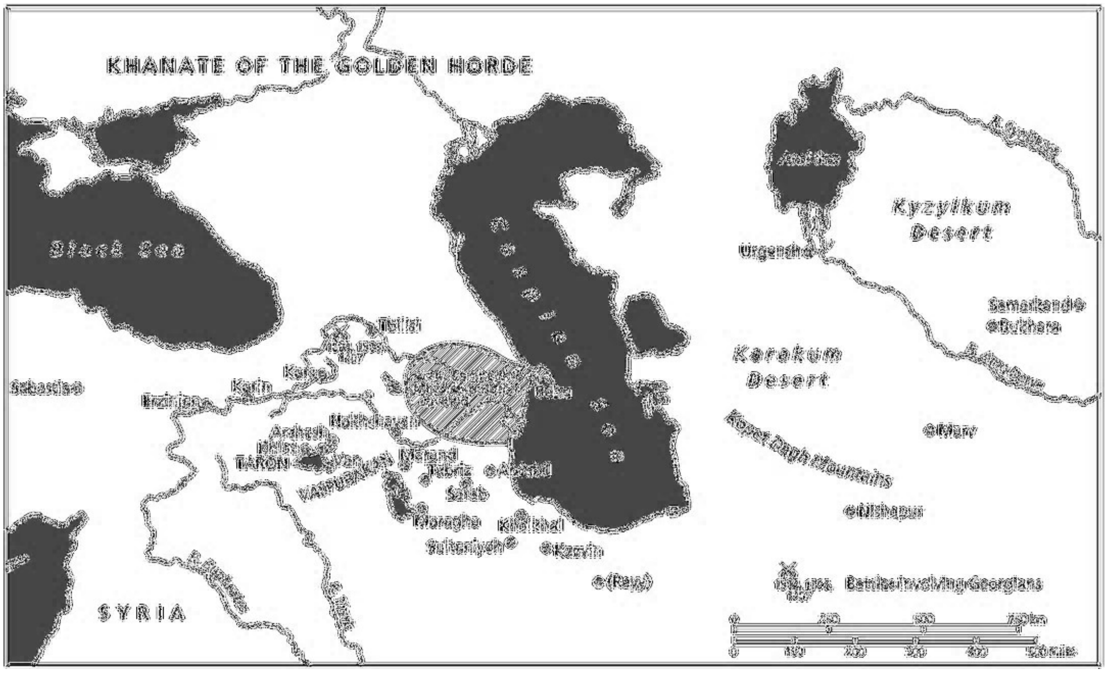
The importance of his Georgian ally to Hülagü was further confirmed in 1264 when at the Il-Khan's last *khurultay* his vassals included not only Prince Bohemond of Antioch and King Hetum of Armenia, but also Davit VI of Georgia.[74] It was also two Georgian brothers, Ioane and Iakobi Vaseli, who were chosen by Hülagü's successor Abagha in 1276 as envoys to the pope and the kings of France and England in the hope of persuading them to mount another crusade. This proposal was repeated in 1289 through a Genoese messenger carrying letters from Il-Khan Arghun, offering to contribute 30,000 Mongolian horsemen and ‘the Christian Kings of Georgia’, but although the proposal was reiterated in 1291 it received no response in Europe.[75] When the next Il-Khan, Ghazan – ‘without question the greatest of the Il-Khans’[76] – succeeded to the throne in 1295 he became a Muslim and adopted the title of sultan, and had little enthusiasm for launching raids on Syrian cities in Egyptian hands. The last Persian Il-Khan, ^{c}Abu Sa^{c}id (1316–35), was a cultured Muslim who permitted the foundation of the Catholic bishopric of Sultaniyeh in 1318.[77]

The Golden Horde and Timurlenk

For the Mongols and Turks of the Golden Horde under Batu Khan, who in 1236–42 ravaged Volga Bulgaria, Russia, Poland and Hungary, the Caucasus was on their doorstep, accessible via the Caspian–North Caucasus steppe and a Volga crossing. From its formation, therefore, the Golden Horde impinged upon North Caucasus, Georgia and Azerbaijan. It is not surprising therefore that intense antagonism developed between Il-Khan Hülagü and Berke of the Golden Horde (the first Great Khan to become a Muslim) over their rights in Persia and the Caucasus, culminating in an expedition sent in 1262 by Berke under the command of Nogay, which, by way of the Caspian coast road and Darband, occupied Shirvan and defeated Hülagü's army near Shamakha. Nogay withdrew north to Daghestan, but, having been defeated there by Hülagü's forces and driven out of Darband, retreated north to the Terek. Here the Mongols were routed by the Golden Horde's army in January 1263.[78]

Such encounters as these, however, did not compare with the disaster which struck most of the Caucasian lands a century later, when Timurlenk of Kesh (near Samarkand), as if adopting the dual role of Great Khan and champion of Islam, set out in 1381 to recreate Chingis Khan's empire. Although not of Mongol descent, but a Turk born in Chaghatay Transoxania, Timur had served his apprenticeship in warfare along with his brother-in-law Mir Huseyn of Balkh as a mercenary in Afghanistan. Returning in 1363, the two adventurers drove out the Mongol prince Ilyas and declared an independent state in Transoxania. However, as Chingisid ancestry remained essential legitimation for a ruler in Central Asia, Timur and Mir Huseyn located a genuine descendant of Chingis Khan and installed him as nominal ruler. His alliance with Mir Huseyn having outlived its usefulness, Timur had him killed in 1370 and, asserting his legitimacy by maintaining his Chingisid puppet, declared himself 'the heir and continuator of Chingis Khan and Chaghatai'. Finally, about 1397 he strengthened his Chingisid credentials by marrying a daughter of the Khan of Mogholistan. Although Timur 'frequently stressed his faith in Islam, claiming that he would make it the dominant religion in the world', and in 1388 adopted the title 'sultan', nevertheless 'his troops desecrated mosques…and killed Muslim men, women and children or took them captive by the thousand in order to sell them as slaves'. Indeed, despite the *shariᶜah*'s ban on Muslims killing or enslaving Muslims, this continued to be Timur's main occupation.[79] Indeed, it has been said that 'In spite of his bigoted and ostentatious Sunnī piety, [Timur] was one of the worst enemies to whom Islamic civilization ever fell a victim.'[80]

Timur's empire stretched from Trebizond to Kabul and from the Aral Sea to the Persian Gulf, but his field of operations covered practically all the civilized regions of the great Eurasian steppe and Anatolia, from the borders of China to Crimea and the fringe of the Russian forests. Within this vast expanse he rampaged as an embodiment of hyperactivity and blind destructiveness (see Map 13).[81]


KHANATE OF THE GOLDEN HORDE
Black Sea
Aral Sea
Kyzylkum Desert
Urgench
Samarkand
Bukhara
Karakum Desert
Kopet Dagh Mountains
Marv
Nishapur
Tbilisi
Kars
Karin
Sebastia
Erzinjan
Nakhchavan
Arcesh
TARON
Van
VASPURAKAN
Marand
Tabriz
Ardabil
Sarab
Maragha
Khalkhal
Sultaniyeh
Kazvin
(Rayy)
Baku
SYRIA
Battles involving Georgians
0 250 500 750 km
0 100 200 300 400 500 miles

Map 13 Timurlenk: victims of invasions of the Caucasus in the late fourteenth century by Tamerlane and Tokhtamysh with the aim of destroying civilized centres of settled habitation, agriculture, manufacture and commerce and returning them to nomadic pastures. Only towns and regions – chiefly Armenian and Azerbaijani – which were totally devastated and the inhabitants massacred are shown. Compare Map 15.

The Caucasus evoked Timur's especial fury because his protégé and rival, the Kypchak khan of the Golden Horde, Tokhtamysh, invaded Daghestan and occupied Darband and Shirvan in the name of the Golden Horde, thus starting a sporadic war between Timur and his ‘son’ (1391–8). Having driven Tokhtamysh out of Shirvan, Timur went on to ravage eastern Georgia, whose King Giorgi VII had defied him. In 1393, after raiding in Persia, Timur returned to the Caucasus, where he routed Tokhtamysh on the Terek in 1395 and devastated Circassia, Chechenia and Daghestan. Shirvan, however, escaped, because its ruler, Ibrahim I, pursued what

Azerbaijani historians call a ‘flexible policy’ of collaboration with Timur. After a two-year respite while Timur raided India, in 1401 he returned to the Caucasus for tribute and loot, mainly at the expense of Georgia.[82]

When Timur died in 1405 there were rebellions against his successors, during which Shirvan-shah Ibrahim, ambitious to rule over a united Turkish state, allied himself with the king of Georgia. However, the unity of Georgia itself came to an end with the death of King Aleksandre in 1443 and, as a result of internecine warfare, Kartli, Kakheti and Imereti became separate kingdoms. There were also five principalities in western Georgia, each with its own ruling family – in Svaneti the Gelovani clan, in Abkhazia the Sharvashidze family, in Megrelia the Dadianis, in Guria the Gurielis and in Samtskhe (Meskheti) the Jaqelis.[83]

The Fourth Crusade

Byzantium had declined after the death of Emperor Manuel in 1180, and its collapse began in 1199, when in Rome Pope Innocent III preached a new crusade. Starting at the highest level with an approach to Emperor Alexius III about unification of the Western and Eastern Churches, the pious initiative soon degenerated into intrigues and violence. Because of the rise of the independent Orthodox kingdoms of Bulgaria and Serbia in south-eastern Europe, the overland route to Constantinople was no longer practicable for a Catholic army and, as Jerusalem was now under Egyptian rule, the organizers of the campaign decided that not Constantinople but Cairo – nearly 2,000 miles away from central Europe across the Mediterranean – must be the objective of this Fourth Crusade. To fund this enormous campaign Dandolo, the doge of Venice, agreed to provide victuals, transport ships and a convoy of galleys for 33,500 Crusaders. His price was 85,000 marks in cash, half-shares in any territory acquired, and certain military services. In November 1202 the Crusaders had to regain for Venice from its Hungarian occupiers the Adriatic city of Zara (Zadar) – where Venetians and Crusaders fought over the loot. Venice then forced the diversion of the expedition from Egypt to Constantinople, where they installed the son of a deposed emperor on the throne. The new emperor Alexius IV undertook to Romanize the Greek Orthodox clergy and introduce Roman Catholic ritual, to reinforce the Crusaders' army with 10,000 imperial soldiers, and to find in Constantinople's treasury sufficient funds to pay off the Venetians. His desperate attempts to fulfill these promises led to a violent palace revolution.

In April 1204 the 'Crusaders', encamped outside Constantinople, breached the city walls and sacked this other 'Holy City' ruthlessly. While the Venetians carried off art treasures, the French and Flemings indulged in vandalism, slaughter and rape in the great city which for 900 years had been the capital of Christian civilization.[84] Meanwhile, refugees from Constantinople, including Alexius III's daughter Anna and her entourage, set up a legitimate remnant of the Byzantine state at Nicaea on the Asian side of the Bosporus to hold until they might regain Constantinople. Half of the territory conquered by the west Europeans was taken over by the Crusader régime as 'Romania' or the 'Latin Empire'; the other half fell to the doge, according to his bond.[85] The Venetians decided that the new 'emperor' would be Count Baudouin of Flanders, seized for themselves the Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom, and appointed a Venetian as patriarch. Moreover, they annexed the western coast and southern peninsula of continental Greece, including important seaports, Crete, Rhodes and other islands. Thus, '[t]he pretence that the expedition was ever to go on to fight the infidel was frankly abandoned', and it became blatantly 'an expedition whose only aim was to conquer Christian territory'. It had demolished 'a civilization that was still active and great' – 'an act of gigantic political folly…[which] upset the whole defence system of Christendom'.[86] Ironically, too, this monstrous act of systematic destruction was performed not by 'Asiatic hordes' or 'infidels', but by leaders of the supposedly superior civilization of western Europe.

Meanwhile, in Antioch, as a result of the pact between Levon II of Armenia and Prince Bohemond III in 1194, a 22-year civil war of succession had begun (involving not only the Franks and Armenians, but also the Catholic clergy and Knights Hospitallers, the local Greeks, the Knights Templars, the Muslims of Aleppo and the Konya Seljuqs). The Cilician throne too became the cause of strife following the death of King Levon II in 1219, and this led to the triumph of the Hetumids of Lambron over the Rubenids. However, it was not until 1248 that, thanks to the mediation of Louis IX of France, lower Cilician Armenia and Antioch were reconciled.[87] By then the Mongols had appeared on the Near Eastern horizon, and an unexpected alliance between them and the Armenians developed. It was largely King Hetum I's idea of 'replac[ing] the Western by the Mongol alliance and organiz[ing] a Christian–Mongol offensive against Islam and its stronghold Egypt' that induced the Mongolian invasion of Syria and Mesopotamia. After Ögädäy Khan's death in 1241 all descendants of Chingis Khan ceased fighting and travelled back to Mongolia to confer. Only in western Asia, which was left under Baichu's command, did the Mongol advance continue. Moving westward from Mesopotamia, he took Erzurum in 1243 and halted only on reaching Caesarea-Mazacha, where the Seljuq sultan Kai-Khosrau submitted to him.[88]

Among thirteenth-century Europeans, despite the devastation recently caused by the Mongols in much of eastern Europe, '[t]he legend of Prester John spread an almost apocalyptic belief that salvation was coming from the East.' Reports, especially from Nestorians, about Chingis Khan's sympathy towards Christians and his hatred of Muslims encouraged many people to think that he might in fact be Prester John, a champion capable of leading a decisive crusade.[89] However, the idea of collaborating with the Mongols to fight the Muslims gained little support in Crusader circles until King Louis IX of France arrived in 1248. Although he refused to negotiate with Muslims, he was quite prepared to enter into relations with the Mongols, on the improbable basis of the Prester John myth and the fact that Pope Innocent IV had given it sufficient credence to make him send an embassy to Karakorum in 1245, led by the Franciscan friar Giovanni da Pian del Carpini. A second ambassador from Innocent, the Dominican Ascelin, went to Baichu's headquarters in Tabriz in 1249 to explore the possibility of a Christian–Mongol alliance against Egypt.

In the following year King Hetum of Armenia too travelled to Karakorum to pay homage to Great Khan Möngkä, thus making Cilicia a vassal state, protected from Mongol attack and exempt from taxation of its churches and monasteries, and Möngkä Khan indicated that if all the Christian powers followed suit he would recover Jerusalem for them. The culmination of Hetum's unique relationship with Karakorum came in 1258, when the army of the Mongol Il-Khans in Persia which invaded Syria and Mesopotamia and captured Baghdad, included Armenian, Georgian and Antiochene knights. In 1250, however, Louis IX's Crusade to liberate ‘the Holy Land’ came to grief, with the king and his entire army defeated and captured by the Mamluk sultan in the Nile delta. Leaving his brother as a hostage, Louis sailed back to Acre, the headquarters of the Crusaders who hung on there as long as they could keep the Muslims at bay. However, in 1254 Louis was forced to sail for home, and his crusade came to an end.[90]

Meanwhile Berke Khan of the Golden Horde had converted to Islam and subsequently allied himself with the ruler of Egypt, the Kypchak, Sultan Rukn ad-Din Baybars. During the Il-Khan invasion of Syria Baybars's army in 1260 inflicted the first defeat ever suffered by the Mongols on Hülagü's general Kitbogha at the Battle of ᶜAin Jalud, and Egypt regained control over Syria. This was disastrous for the Armenians too, as King Hetum's main allies were temporarily marginalized and unable to come to his aid when Baybars attacked Cilicia and Antioch as a punishment for their alliance with the Mongols. Making Aleppo his base, for the next two years Baybars launched damaging raids on the Antioch region, until Hetum's appeal to Hülagü brought a Mongol force to assist the Armenians in saving the city. Baybars desisted for the time being, but ravaged Syria and Palestine, then in 1266 resumed his assault on Cilicia, when Hetum was in Tabriz seeking help from the Il-Khans. Making a detour to bypass Antioch, with its Armenian and Templar garrison, the Mamluks attacked and routed the Cilicians in the Pyramus valley. They systematically devastated all the Armenian towns from Sis to Tarsus, so that when Hetum returned he found his whole country in ruins. ‘The Cilician kingdom never recovered from the disaster. It was no longer able to play more than a passive part in the politics of Asia.’ Meanwhile the Egyptians withdrew to Aleppo with 40,000 captives and ‘caravans of booty’, and waited a year before subjecting Antioch to similar destruction in 1268.[91] While Hetum retired to a monastery, his son inherited the kingdom as Levon III (1269–89) and continued his pro-Mongol policy in alliance with the Il-Khan Abaqa, who challenged the Mamluks again in 1281 with an army including detachments of Armenians, Georgians and Franks, but was defeated at Ḥimṣ by Sultan Qalaᶜun.[92]

Internally, Cilician Armenia went into decline, the Hetum succession producing a series of brief reigns punctuated by baronial squabbles and fratricide. Muslim pressure and attacks increased relentlessly, while appeals to European rulers received no practical response. Meanwhile the Armenians had become closely involved with the island kingdom of Cyprus. Levon II, who had joined King Richard I of England in conquering the island in 1191 on his way to join the Crusades, became an ally and son-in-law of the French prince Amalric of Lusignan who was eventually crowned king of both Cyprus and Jerusalem. Levon also married his daughter to Amalric, the brother of King Henry II of Cyprus. Similarly King Hetum I arranged dynastic marriages between his sister and King Henry I of Cyprus, and between his daughter and Baudouin, the island's seneschal. In the fourteenth century, on the other hand, the king of Cyprus, Peter I, conceived the ambition of becoming king of the Armenians or ruling them by proxy through one of the Lusignan princes.[93]

The Armenian dynasty itself, after holding its own in the Levant for 300 years, came to an end in 1341 when Levon V died childless. He had bequeathed Cilicia to the French Catholic family of Lusignan, the offspring of his aunt, the widow of King Amalric of Jerusalem, so that the Cilician royal house was no longer Armenian, and now had many links with

Cyprus. Despite Egyptian pressure Cilician Armenia survived thanks to the support of the Franks and the Mongols, but when the Mongol Il-Khanate collapsed the Turks annexed most of its territory in 1337. Losing even the support of the Kingdom of Cyprus, which was attacked in 1375 by the Genoans, the Mamluks and the Turks, the remnants of Cilicia were completely subjugated, and the end of Armenian independence was marked by the flight of the last Armenian king, Levon VI, to Paris, where he died.[94] The remnant of the 'Kingdom of Armenia' – a small territory around Tarsus, was by 1401 swallowed up by the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt, called by the Arabic of that time 'the Empire of the Turks', because a high proportion of the 'slave' soldiers were indeed of Turkic origin.[95]

Although Cilician Armenia had disappeared as a state, it left an important legacy to the Armenian people. It 'had provided the Armenians with a door…[through which] they were to pass into the Mediterranean and Western lands in increasing numbers, and install themselves in strength in Cyprus, at Cairo and Smyrna, and as far afield as Venice and Marseilles' – not to mention India.[96] Nor had the Armenians disappeared entirely from Cilicia: in the late nineteenth century an English scholar who travelled extensively through what had historically been Armenia, reported that '[t]heir descendants still maintain themselves in the district', and he estimated that Cilicia, northern Syria and the Anatolian uplands contained some 752,000 Armenians.[97]

The Byzantine Empire's end and Ottoman Turkey's triumph

Meanwhile what became the Turkish empire – named after the leader of a tribe in north-western Anatolia, Uthman (the

Ottoman empire) – took over ever more territory as *ghazi*s, motivated, according to a Turkish historian, not by religious fervour but by 'the pressure of population and the need for expansion resulting from the movement of immigration from central Anatolia…as well as the desire of Anatolian Turks to escape from Mongol oppression and to start a new life in new territory'.[98]

Things had certainly changed since the twelfth century, when in Byzantium '[the] exploits of the crusaders rendered it comparatively easy for [Emperor] Alexius to expel the Turks from western Anatolia, to reincorporate this region into the…Empire, and to strengthen…the boundary which…separated it from territory remaining in Turkish hands'.[99] The Turkish state in Anatolia had been nominally subordinate to the parent Seljuq Empire in Persia, but when the last powerful sultan there, Sanjar, died in 1157, the Sultanate of Rum centred on Konya became practically independent. Under Sultan Kylych-Arslan II (1155–92) the long conflict with the Danishmend emirate ended in 1174 with its incorporation into Rum, and the coming-of-age of the latter was confirmed two years later when it defeated the army of Byzantine emperor Manuel at Myriocephalum – which the emperor considered to be as great a disaster for the empire as Manazkert had been a century before.

[1] *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, pp. 751–2; Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, p. 93; Guillaume, *Islam*, pp. 40–2, 47–8, 72; Koran, 2:190, 4:73, 8:37, 9:38.

[2] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 237–56; D. M. Lang, *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy 1658–1832*, New York, 1957, pp. 58–62, 83–4; Lewis, *Middle East*,

pp. 201, 202, 205; Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', p. 623.

[3] The origin of the nickname is obscure; its traditional interpretation was as a hybrid of Persian *gorg* 'wolf' and Turkic *arslan* 'lion', but the combination of the two Persian roots *gorg* 'wolf' and *sar* 'head' gained favour in the twentieth century: see Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 368–9.

[4] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 270; *Letopis Kartli*, pp. 16–17; C. Toumanoff, 'Chronology of the early kings of Iberia', *Traditio*, 1969, 25, pp. 1–33; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, p. 294; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 375–7; A. Tsagareli, 'Gruziya', in *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. IX, p. 797.

[5] Baramidze *et al.*, Istoriya gruzinskoy literatury, p. 20; Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, p. 156; *Letopis Kartli*, p. 17; *Zhizn tsaritsy tsarits Tamar*, translated by V. D. Dondua edited by M. M. Berdzenishvili, Tbilisi, 1985, pp. 45, 60–1.

[6] *Letopis Kartli*, pp. 17–18; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 201–2, 328–9.

[7] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, pp. 290, 294; vol. II, p. 86.

[8] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, edited with an introduction and indices by A. A. Rogava, Tbilisi, 1971, p. 94.

[9] *Letopis Kartli*, p. 36. Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 351–2, explains that Murvan-Qru here is a conflation of Marwan I

and Marwan II.

[10] Baramidze, *et al.*, *Istoriya gruzinskoy literatury*, pp. 15–16; *Letopis Kartli*, pp. 36–7, 41–3; *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 181–3.

[11] Confusion in the sources for Georgian medieval history is suggested by the comment in Suny's *Making*, pp. 32 n. 46, 34, that, although this king 'is usually designated Davit II, Toumanoff and some of his followers regard him as Davit III'. Other historians, especially Georgians and Russians, call him Davit IV, e.g. Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 157ff.; N. Berdzenishvili and S. Janashia, eds., *sakartvelos isṭoria: saḳitkhavi tṣigni*, Tbilisi, 1980, pp. 97ff.

[12] As the king's Georgian epithet *aghmashenebeli* is grander than the ordinary word for a builder, *mshenebeli*, various historians have attempted to convey its meaning in English by using 'the Restorer'. However, as *aghmashenebeli* was used in Georgian in such rhetorical phrases as 'builders of communism', 'Builder' seems adequate here.

[13] Bosworth, 'Political and dynastic history', p. 123; M. Lordkipanidze, *Georgia in the XI–XII Centuries*, translated from Russian by D. Skvirsky, Tbilisi, 1987, pp. 88–99.

[14] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 99.

[15] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. II, pp. 159–60, 431. Runciman on p. 160, n. 1, mentions that Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, one of his Western Latin sources, 'gives the credit for the Georgian victory [not to the Georgians but] to Frankish mercenaries'.

[16] *Kartlis tskhovreba*, vols. I, II, IV, Tbilisi, 1955–73, vol. I, pp. 325–6, cited in Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy*, p. 35; see also Lordkipanidze, *Georgia*, p. 94.

[17] Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 13.

[18] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, p. 165; Lordkipanidze, *Georgia*, pp. 98, 104. These sources give no authority for their statements, nor does there appear to be any confirmation of collaboration between the Crusaders and Georgia in another Western history of the Crusades: K. M. Setton, *et al.*, eds., *A History of the Crusades*, 5 vols., Philadelphia and Madison, 1955–89.

[19] Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy*, pp. 35–7.

[20] See *Ibid*., pp. 36–41.

[21] Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 243–8; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, pp. 638–9; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, p. 130; A. Gieysztor, *et al.*, *History of Poland*, 2nd edn, Warsaw, 1979, pp. 131–2,136; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 184–7; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 139–40, 156–8.

[22] Lang, *Armenia*, p. 200.

[23] *Ibid*., pp. 169–71; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, pp. 7, 9, 11, 20, 27–8, 75, etc.; vol. II, p. 512; Ware, *Orthodox Church*, pp. 29, 32–7.

[24] Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 200–1; H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and Studies*, 2 vols., London, 1901, vol. I, *The Russian Provinces*, pp. 276, 367; vol. II, *The Turkish Provinces*, pp. 427, 502; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, pp. 30, 33–4.

[25] Lang, *Armenia*, p. 201; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 140; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 628–9. Differences between the eastern and western dialects of Armenian produce such spellings as ‘Partzrpert’ and ‘Roupen’ or ‘Bardzrberd’ and ‘Ruben’.

[26] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 148–50.

[27] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. I, pp. 56–7, 74, 112–13, 249–54, 258–62; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 629–30.

[28] Lang, *Armenia*, p. 202; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. II, pp. 345–8, 351–3, 364; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 629–30. Toumanoff's ‘Anazarbus’ is consistently contradicted by ‘Anarzaba’ in the Armenian version of Nersisyan's history, *Hay zhoghovrdi patmutyun*, Yerevan, 1985, map of Cilicia opp. p. 186, index p. 514.

[29] J. M. Hussey, ‘The later Macedonians, the Comneni and the Angeli’, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part 1, p. 235; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. II, pp. 389–90, 429–30, 470; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, p. 631.

[30] Lang, *Armenia*, p. 203; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 630–1.

[31] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. II, p. 223; vol. III, pp. 87–90.

[32] *Ibid*., vol. III, pp. 86–91.

[33] Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 631–3.

[34] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 147; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, p. 631.

[35] A. Herrmann, *An Historical Atlas of China*, new edn, edited by N. Ginsburg, Edinburgh, 1966, plates 30–1, 37, 39–40, 42–3; Spuler, ‘Disintegration’, pp. 160–1; B. Spuler, *History of the Mongols, based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, translated from German by H. Drummond and S. Drummond, London, 1972, pp. 1–10, 17–20, 23–4.

[36] H. R. Roemer, ‘Tīmūr in Iran’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI, p. 43.

[37] Mottahadeh, ‘ᶜAbbasid caliphate’, pp. 58–9.

[38] Juvaini, ᶜAla’ ad-Din ᶜAta Malik, *The History of the World Conqueror*, translated from the text of Mirza Muhammad Qazvini by J. A. Boyle, 2 vols., Manchester, 1958, pp. 3, 15.

[39] *The Secret History of the Mongols*, cited by Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, pp. 2, 26.

[40] Koran, 2:165–7, 190–3; 9:1–14; J.-P. Roux, ‘Tengri’, in M. Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 17 vols., London, 1987, vol. XIV, pp. 401–2; Roux, ‘Turkic religions’, *Ibid*., vol. XVII, pp. 87, 89–93; W. Heissig, ‘Mongol religions’, *Ibid*., vol. X, pp. 54–7.

[41] Barhebraeus, Gregorius, *Chronicon Syriacum*, cited by Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, pp. 39–41; *The Secret History of the Mongols*, pp. 23–4, 26, 27.

[42] J. A. Boyle, ‘Dynastic and political history of the Īl-Khāns’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, pp. 303–8, 311–14, 321, 315, 321; Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, pp. 82–3, 96, 103–5, 123–5, 129–30, 147, 153, 162–4.

[43] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 110–16; Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo shirvanshakhov*, pp. 148–50, 155–61.

[44] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 174.

[45] Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 317–23.

[46] Buniyatov, *Gosudarstvo atabekov*, pp. 114–15.

[47] *Povest vremennykh let*, edited by V. P. Adrianova-Peretts, 2 vols., Moscow, 1950, under the years 6731–2/1223–24.

[48] M. F. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l’Antiquité jusqu'au XIX siècle*, part 1 ‘Histoire ancienne jusqu'en 1469 de J.C.’, St Petersburg, 1849, vol. I, pp. 497 n. 2, and other

sources, cited by Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 111 and nn. 2, 3, p. 372.

[49] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 110–12; Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 311, 322–8.

[50] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 249–50.

[51] Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 223–4; Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 328–35.

[52] McEvedy, *Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, pp. 74–7.

[53] Turan, ‘Anatolia’, pp. 248–50.

[54] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 113 n. 1; Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, p. 361; Taeschner, ‘Turks and the Byzantine Empire’, pp. 748–50; Turan, ‘Anatolia’, pp. 246–51.

[55] Taeschner, ‘Turks and the Byzantine Empire’, pp. 749–52.

[56] Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 414–15; Petrushevsky, ‘Socio-economic condition’, p. 496; H. R. Roemer, ‘The Jalayirids, Muzaffarids and Sarbadārs’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI, pp. 2–4.

[57] Heissig, ‘Mongol religions’.

[58] Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, p. 410; Roemer, ‘Tīmūr in Iran’, p. 80; Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, pp. 5,

8, 202, 211.

[59] Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, p. 202.

[60] See the very useful dynastic tables of the Chingis family in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, pp. 418–21.

[61] See maps in Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, pp. xi–xiv.

[62] ‘Il-Khan’ is a confusing title, which is not Persian, but Turkic, like many terms associated with the Mongols, combining two words which occur in most Turkic languages (e.g. Uzbek, Tatar and Turkmen): *khan* ‘ruler’ and *il* or *el* ‘people’: ‘the country of a people or tribe’. (In Mongolian *il* is an adjective meaning ‘obvious’, ‘open’, ‘legal’: A. Luvsandendev, ed., *Mongol oros tolʹ*, Moscow, 1957, p. 218). Persian does have the words ī*l*, ‘tribe’ (presumably from Turkic) and *ilkhan*, ‘leader of a nomad tribe’, but in a historical context Ilkhan is specifically ‘the title of a member of the Hulagid dynasty’: *Persidsko-russkiy slovar*, vol. I, p. 149.

[63] Hodgson, ‘Isma^{c}ili state’, pp. 477–9.

[64] Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 341–5.

[65] *Ibid*., p. 345.

[66] A. Bausani, ‘Religion under the Mongols’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, pp. 538–9; Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 345–50; Rashid ad-Din and Wassaf, cited by Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, pp. 4, 115–22, 146–7.

[67] Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, p. 355.

[68] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 113; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, p. 250.

[69] Suny, *Making*, p. 30.

[70] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 284–5; Rashid ad-Din, quoted in Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, pp. 135–6; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 302–5.

[71] Boyle, ‘ Dynastic history of the Il-Khans’, p. 350.

[72] *Ibid*., pp. 351–2; Lewis, ‘Egypt and Syria’, pp. 211–15.

[73] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 310–13.

[74] *Ibid*., vol. III, p. 319.

[75] *Ibid*., vol. III, pp. 346–7, 401–2.

[76] Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 396–7.

[77] *Ibid*., pp. 387–95; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 439–40.

[78] Boyle, ‘Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 352–4.

[79] R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: a History of Central Asia*, translated from French, New Brunswick, 1970,

pp. 409–16, 425; Roemer, ‘Tīmūr in Iran’, pp. 88–90.

[80] Spuler, ‘Disintegration’, p. 170.

[81] Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, pp. 417–20, 427–9, 431, 434, 437, 445, 447, 452, 454–5; Roemer, ‘Tīmūr in Iran’, pp. 55–6; Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, map p. xiv.

[82] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 124–5; Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 163, 235–9, 244; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, pp. 406–8, 437–40; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 69–70; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 198, 213–17; Roemer, ‘Tīmūr in Iran’, pp. 57–8, 61–2, 70–3.

[83] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, p. 242; C. Toumanoff, ‘The fifteenth-century Bagratids and the institution of collegial sovereignty in Georgia’, *Traditio*, 1949–51, pp. 185–6, 188–9, cited by Suny, *Making*, pp. 45–7 nn. 8, 11, 13, 14, but not by Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 31–2.

[84] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 107–23.

[85] The shares in the spoils were in fact to be not 50/50, but $\frac{3}{8}$ each to the Crusaders and the Venetians, and $\frac{1}{4}$ to the future emperor: *Ibid*., vol. III, p. 124.

[86] *Ibid*., vol. III, pp. 107–31.

[87] *Ibid*., vol. III, pp. 87, 100, 107–31, 135, 164, 171–3; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 631, 633.

[88] J. A. Boyle, ‘The journey of Het‘um I, King of Little Armenia, to the court of the Great Khan Möngke’ [reprint from *Central Asiatic Journal*, 9, 1964], in J. A. Boyle, ed., *The Mongol World-Empire 1206–1370*, London, 1977, pp. 175–89; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 164, 252–3, 255–8; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, p. 634.

[89] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 163, 254.

[90] *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia*, vol. V, pp. 278–9; vol. XII, p. 665; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 258–75, 280, 293–316; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, p. 634.

[91] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 310–26; Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, p. 634.

[92] Boyle, ‘ Dynastic history of the Īl-Khāns’, pp. 362–3; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 390–2.

[93] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, pp. 19–23, 40–7, 83–5, 94–5, 134–5, 164–5, 327–9, 345–6, 424, 441.

[94] Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 203, 207–9; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 66–7, 84, 90–6, 101–5, 179, 212, 229–30, 258, 278, 284–5, 289–90, 319, 321–2, 328–35, 394, 345–6, 441–9.

[95] Arabic ‘Dawlat al-Atrāk’ (‘atrak’ being the Arabic plural of ‘tork’): Lewis, ‘Egypt and Syria’, p. 214.

[96] Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 210–11.

[97] Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. I, p. 367; vol. II, p. 427. According to the Constantinople Gregorian patriarchate's figures, in 1912 there were 407,000 Armenians in Cilicia: R. G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence: 1918*, Berkeley, 1969, p. 36.

[98] Halil Inaljik, ‘The emergence of the Ottomans’, in *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, pp. 267–8.

[99] Taeschner, ‘Turks and the Byzantine Empire’, p. 741.

5 Georgia, Shirvan and North Caucasus to the fifteenth century

Georgia at the height of its power

Not all of Davit the Builder's wars were defensive; many were aggressive campaigns intended to extend Georgia's frontiers and gain further territory. One such case was his conquest of the principality of Shirvan, which began in 1117, when King Davit sent his son Demetre with a large army to 'soften up' Shirvan and, having stormed the shah's citadel and frightened off 'Sukman, the supreme commander of the Persian[1] forces', he returned with great booty and many prisoners. It was Davit himself who led the main assault on Shirvan in 1120, although his daughter, Tamar, had just been married to the Shirvan-shah Minuchehr III. The neighbouring principalities of Darband and Aran were closely involved with Shirvan, and, as political relations within them and between them were often turbulent, and complicated by the Seljuq presence, records of events are often unclear. In any case,

> The Georgian king waged an unending struggle for Shirvan…seizing towns and fortresses and then retreating again. While the Christians in Shirvan supported the king…the Muslims begged the Seljuk sultan to protect them against the 'infidel' king…[I]t was vital to consolidate…Georgian power in Shirvan…[Moreover, as] the shah of Shirvan was the sultan's prisoner and no longer figured in subsequent events…[i]n 1124, when David finally conquered Shirvan, he subjugated…[it] directly to the Crown. The towns and

> fortresses were garrisoned with Georgian troops, and the country was governed by officials appointed by the Georgian court.[2]

Berdzenishvili makes a rather boastful assertion (with rhetoric typical of the Soviet Russian period) about further victories won by Davit the Builder's successors:

> As the interests of the peoples of Transcaucasia coincided with those of Georgia in this struggle against the Seljuqs, Georgia enjoyed their universal support…Georgia performed the great historic mission incumbent upon her of liberating the Transcaucasian peoples: by the beginning of the thirteenth century the feudal-cultural world of the Caucasus and adjoining countries was united around Georgia.[3]

However that may be, the 'distinct Georgian Christian culture and civilization' then existing already displayed a pattern of social differentiation based on nationality which was to persist until the nineteenth century: Georgians – mainly landowners and peasants – generally lived rurally, while much of the urban population consisted of Armenians, Muslims and other non-Georgians. Tbilisi in particular was for long a predominantly Muslim city.[4] Much of the territory coveted by Georgia belonged to Persia, which during the twelfth century was racked by violence among rival Seljuq princes and the Turkmen emirs on whom they depended for support. Aran, Shirvan and part of Azerbaijan were dominated by Atabeg Eldigüz, and Armenia's Turkish rulers the Shah-Armanids were also frequently involved in the politics and warfare of Azerbaijan. These Muslim rulers had to defend their conquests in 1154 when King Demetre I of

Georgia invaded Armenia and captured first Ani, then Erzurum. When his successor Giorgi III repeated this expedition in 1161 and took the two old Armenian capitals, Ani and Dvin, this evoked a combined reaction from Eldigüz and other Muslim leaders, who invaded Georgia and defeated Giorgi. However, this did not prevent him from raiding Ganja in 1166 and intervening in Darband to support the Shirvan-shah Akhsitan, a relation by marriage of the Bagratids.[5]

Thus Georgia's dominance in south Caucasia continued for a century after the death of Davit the Builder, to reach its peak during the reigns of Queen Tamar (1184–1212) and King Giorgi IV Lasha (1212–23) (see Map 14). Indeed, it is generally recognized that in the reign of Tamar,[6] Georgia, having conquered neighbouring territories until it extended from the Black Sea to the Caspian, attained its greatest flourishing in both political and cultural terms. ‘[I]n the second half of the twelfth century Georgia had become a politically strong state, possessing influence and authority on an international scale. The king of Georgia enjoyed universal respect. However, in terms of its internal situation things were more complicated.’ As in Europe with its dukedoms and earldoms, the rulers of Georgia's numerous regional fiefdoms jealously defended their hereditary rights and their independence from the monarch. While the centralizing power of the king increased under Davit the Builder and his successors, the resistance of the nobility to this autocratic tendency also hardened, in some cases to the point of treacherous alliances with the king's enemies.[7]

This tendency was particularly strong in the early years of Queen Tamar's reign, when Georgia's first contacts with Russia occurred. Tamar came to the throne at the age of 18, and unmarried. At that time the outcast son of Grand Prince Andrey of Suzdal, Yuriy Bogolyubskiy, was living among the Kypchaks in the Volga–Don steppes, where Muslim merchants encountered him, and the emir of Tbilisi proposed him as a suitable spouse for Queen Tamar. They were married in 1185, but unfortunately 'the Russian began to manifest Scythian propensities and in his disgusting drunkenness performed many indecent acts' which Tamar endured almost three years before denouncing him and terminating the marriage. The question of an heir remained crucial, however, and soon an acceptable candidate, the Osetian prince David (a distant Bagratid relative) – 'cultured, manly, a mighty warrior, a knight without equal…perfect in all virtues' – became Tamar's prince-consort.[8] Bogolyubskiy, however, did not immediately desist from his disruptive activities, but

> made three attempts to seize the kingdom, and the nobility, especially of West Georgia, rose in great numbers on his behalf…[O]n the whole, however, the tension between the Crown and the aristocracy resolved itself into an equipoise in the reign of Thamar…[and] the Crown had to accept limitations imposed upon it by the Council of State composed of lords temporal and spiritual – an embryonic parliament.[9]

Meanwhile, Tamar's armies made war on the Seljuqs and other neighbouring peoples with the aim of enlarging Iberia, adding to her realm '[a]ll of Azerbaijan and Gilan as far as… Tabriz, the northern half of Armenia and all the Caucasian [mountain] regions as far as the river Vardan [i.e. Kuban]'.[10] To the south-west they captured not only Dvin, Kars and Ardabil, but advanced westward against the Sultanate of

Rum as far as Khlat and Erzurum. At this time Sultan Rukn ad-Din was busy defending his realm not only from the Crusaders but also from his rival brothers and the west Anatolian Danishmend Turkmens, but he put those operations aside in order to attack Tamar, who ‘seemed a far more dangerous menace to Islam than any Latin potentate’.[11] So successful were the Georgians’ campaigns in the east that a Muslim coalition was formed by the caliph of Baghdad and the atabeg of Azerbaijan to drive them out of Shirvan. However, the Georgian victory at Shamkhor in 1195 was decisive, as they not only held their ground in Shirvan and Ganja, but also gave a convincing demonstration of Georgia's military superiority throughout the Near East. This was further confirmed at the time of the Frankish Crusaders’ sacking of Constantinople in 1204, when Tamar's troops marched into the ethnically Georgian Black Sea coastal province of Lazica and installed as its rulers two grandsons of the Byzantine emperor Andronicus Comnenus, who were Tamar's nephews and had been educated at her court. As well as the territory of Trebizond, these Greek princes took over other towns scattered along the south-eastern Black Sea coast from Lazica to Heraclea. Thus Alexius Comnenus became ruler of a new ‘Empire of Trebizond’, with Tamar as his suzerain, founding a Greek dynasty which would last for 250 years. Tamar's own conquests in Anatolia reached their apogee when her troops took the Armenian city of Kars in 1204 and in the following year inflicted a severe defeat on Rukn ad-Din's Turks at Basiani.[12] According to a Georgian historian, Christian Georgia, with vassals including not only the Turkish emirs of Erzinjan, Erzurum and Khlat in Armenia and other Muslim rulers in Azerbaijan, but also the Osetians, Circassians and Abkhazians of North Caucasus, became for a time the most powerful state in the Near East and considered itself to be the successor to Byzantium.[13]

Queen Tamar's reign represents the flowering of Georgia's medieval culture, with the construction of many fine churches such as Metekhi in Tbilisi, and Samtavro and Sveti Tskhoveli in the old capital Mtskheta.[14] Its most outstanding monument was, however, Shota Rustaveli's long narrative poem *The Man in Tiger-skin* (*vepkhisṭqaosani*),[15] which the poet describes in his Prologue as ‘This Persian tale that I have rendered into Georgian’ – a work which became almost a sacred text for Georgians.[16] Its celebrated poetic merits are almost impossible to appreciate in translation, as are the behavioural conventions portrayed (despite their superhuman prowess in combat, its heroes lament their separation from their ladies with frequent and hysterical weeping and fainting). Even the poem's title is controversial: although the hero is a kind of knight-errant, he is not referred to as a ‘knight’ (*raindi*), but by a suffix indicating possession of something.[17]

Although Tamar had a sword buckled on her at her coronation and inspired her people to so many military triumphs, she never led them into battle personally: the queen decided when the Georgians must go to war, but King Davit led them into battle.[18] The technical organization and mobilization of the troops, on the other hand, were entrusted to the brothers Zakaria and Ioane of the Armenian Kurdish family Mkhargrdzeli.[19] Tamar is celebrated for her humility and compassion, ‘cherish[ing]…in her heart nothing but the spirit of wisdom, fear of the Lord, and justice and mercy towards all people’. Her *Life* records that as she sent her army off to besiege Kars she walked barefoot to a hilltop, knelt in prayer with tears streaming down her cheeks, and blessed each noble commander as he departed.[20] The Georgian historian Davit Bagrationi (1767–1819) writes:

‘Empress Tamar's virtues will be forever remembered in Iberia, and…the Iberian peoples consider her memory sacred according to the traditions which proclaim her compassion, gentleness and philanthropy.’ After her death in 1212 Tamar was canonized, and several mural portraits of her in imperial Byzantine costume survive in old Georgian churches, such as Betania, where she appears along with her father Giorgi III and her son Giorgi IV ‘Lasha’.[21]

Unfortunately, the reign of Giorgi Lasha marked not only the culmination, but the end of the medieval Georgian kingdom. By the second decade of the thirteenth century, ‘feudal Georgia, carried away by its military triumphs, began to consider itself invincible’, and in Giorgi IV's entourage the idea emerged of a Georgian Crusade to liberate the ‘Holy Land’ from the infidel. Indeed in 1220 the king received a letter from Pope Honorius III proposing that he participate in a crusade, but before he could begin preparations for this, Chingis Khan's Mongol army arrived on the Armenian border and King Giorgi Lasha, returning wounded from his attempt to repel them, died in 1222.[22] Medieval Georgia always had close relations with the Byzantine Empire. Its western provinces on the Black Sea had ports which for centuries had been visited by Greek ships, and came under the influence of Constantinople. Georgia's second strong link was ecclesiastical: it subscribed to the Chalcedonian doctrine of the Greek Orthodox Church. As long as the Eastern Roman Empire retained its power and prestige it behoved the Georgians to submit to the will of their grand suzerain, the Byzantine emperor, but as Constantinople gradually lost even its central territory to the Seljuq and Ottoman Turks, and outlying provinces were taken over by rising states such as Bulgaria and Serbia, or as local rulers seceded and created independent new states such as Trebizond and Cyprus, more remote vassals, including Georgia, also asserted their autonomy. Eventually, when Constantinople fell to the Turks, there would be no choice, and the disappearance of the empire would leave countries such as Georgia without any patron to take their part against their predatory neighbours.

Although most of Georgia's cultural influences came from the east, from the fourteenth century there were also considerable contacts with Europe, chiefly through the Catholic Church, and eventually Italian monks came to Tbilisi and a Catholic bishopric was created. Some of the most detailed observations of Georgia were written and drawn by Catholic clergy, notably the seventeenth-century monk of the Basilian Order, Christoforo de Castelli, and the first grammar of Georgian, compiled in Latin by an Italian missionary, was printed in Rome in 1643.[23]

White Sheep Turks and Black Sheep Turks

In the early fifteenth century big changes occurred in south Caucasus among the Turkmen successors to Timur's empire in western Persia and eastern Anatolia, where two confederations of tribes established themselves as independent emirates – the White Sheep Turks and the Black Sheep Turks (see Map 15).[24] About 1420 the latter began to harass Armenia and the eastern borders of Georgia, where King Ḳonsṭanṭine I of Kartli (1396–1414) led the defence against them. His personal bravery, and Georgian bravado, in attacking the Turkmens, led to his downfall: he outstripped his own retinue in headstrong pursuit of his fleeing enemies and was surrounded and killed. This emboldened the Turkmens to return to the attack, pillaging Klarjeti and Akhaltsikhe provinces before withdrawing. Ḳonsṭanṭine was succeeded by his nephew Aleksandre I (1414–42), who succeeded in unifying under his rule the whole isthmus between the Black Sea and the Caspian, including Circassia, north of the Great Caucasus range, and Shirvan and Shaki in the east. He then reconstructed what had been destroyed by Timurenk, and turned this greater Georgia into a flourishing state. In the 1430s, however, although he repulsed a Turkish raid on Lore, Aleksandre could not challenge the resurgent power of Timur's son Shah Rukh, who had taken over central and southern Persia and seized Azerbaijan and Mughan from the Black Sheep Turks. Shah Rukh accepted a peaceful overture conveyed to him by Aleksandre's son Demetre, and Georgia submitted to his suzerainty.[25] Unfortunately, Aleksandre I bequeathed to his successors the disintegration of the Georgia which he had united, by dividing it between his three sons, so that on his death in 1442 Vakhtang IV received Imereti (all of western Georgia), while Demetre III got Kartli, Akhaltsikhe and Kabarda, and Giorgi VIII Kakheti, Shaki, Shirvan and Darband.[26]

According to David Bagrationi, 'the provinces of Shaki and Shirvan refused to obey the King of Iberia and…rose in rebellion [until] King Aleksandre brought his troops to subdue the rebellious peoples, punished their leaders and made them submit to the legitimate authority'.[27] In fact, it was quite a long time since Shaki, Shirvan and Darband had belonged to Georgia. An authoritative work on Persia at this time indexes Shirvan as a 'Persian province', but also explains that 'Georgia – including…Shirvān and Shakkī – held a particular attraction for the Safavids, as indeed it did for the Ottomans', and that in the sixteenth century 'Shah Tahmāsp was following an established precedent…when he undertook no fewer than four Georgian campaigns…Great as was the attraction of this land for the Safavids, the difficulties confronting them were no less daunting, both on account of its geography and because of the military prowess of the Georgians.'[28]

Shirvan to the fifteenth century

According to the thirteenth-century Arabic geographer Yakut, in his day Turkish-speakers did not form a significant proportion of the population of Shirvan, and their presence or absence in any district was worthy of mention. He noted that the local population of Darband–Shirvan had been required by Persia's kings 'to build…[fortifications] for the defence of the region against various Turkish tribes' coming from the north, and that now Oghuz Turkish pirates occupied an island in the Caspian, where they preyed on shipping. South of the Araxes/Kura on the other hand, Turkmen tribes were already well established in the plain of Mughan, and the population of Persia's province of Azerbaijan near Lake Urmia included many Turks, 'extremely devout Sunnites', who spent most of their time fighting the local Kurds, while in Maragha where 'the people are pale-faced, Turkic…they also speak the Pahlavi dialect [of Persian] mixed with Arabic'.[29]

The first dynasty of Muslims on the Shirvan throne (known as Mazyadids) had been Arabs claiming relationship with the Shaiban tribe, but inevitably over the years the princely families contracted marriages with ladies of local Persian origin, and lost interest in their Arab origins. They also began to give their children Persian names, such as Kubad, Anushirvan and Minuchehr, in preference to the Arabic names of Islam.[30] It may have been because they adopted the Persian name Khosrou that the Shirvan-shahs' next dynasty, founded in the tenth century, became known as Kesranids.[31]

The Oghuz Turks reached Persia's vassal, Shirvan, from the south in 1066 and, after plundering the local Kurds, advanced on Shamakha. The Shirvan-shah, Fariborz I, bought them off, but later in the year the Seljuq Kara-Tegin besieged the city and raided surrounding districts before moving on to Baku, where his horde slaughtered the defenders and abducted women, children and livestock. Fariborz, besieged in Shamakha, had his stud of 4,000 thoroughbred horses moved up to the mountains, but a Seljuq raiding party drove them away to Kara-Tegin's camp on the Kura. To guarantee Shirvan's immunity from further molestation, Fariborz agreed to pay the Turks an annual tribute of 30,000 dinars. (Fariborz I himself was an empire-builder, who had not only conquered the Turkmen nomads of the Mughan steppe, and territory in Aran, but also cultivated a long-standing alliance with the Lakz people in Daghestan, and applied pressure to the Kumyks to convert to Islam.)

The Georgians figured conspicuously as enemies or allies of Shirvan in the eleventh century. For instance, in 1067 a group of Georgians seized a castle in Shirvan's vassal principality of Shaki and handed it over to King Aghsartan of Kakheti. In 1072 Fariborz, with the support of the ruler of Aran, recaptured part of Shaki, but not the whole region.[32] Meanwhile the influx of Seljuq Turks continued: Alp-Arslan had invaded Aran at the end of 1067, and found a co-operative Fariborz offering to assist him in his campaign to subdue Aran. Indeed, in the Caucasian context of vendettas and constant fighting between neighbouring countries, quite often ‘the Shirvan-shah made use of the sultan's influence to injure his own personal enemies’.[33]

For Shirvan, the closest neighbour was Persia's north-western outpost, Darband, where various social groups –

emirs, governors, officials, merchant and craft guilds, clerics, etc. – frequently quarrelled over territory and tribute, and sometimes obtained support from rulers of other states and principalities. In 1066 Fariborz I appointed as his viceroy in Darband his son Afridun, who immediately occupied the citadel and set about improving its fortifications in order to use it as his base for seizing the property of Darband citizens – and was abetted in this enterprise by his father, who sent him monthly relief detachments of troops, until Afridun's return to Shirvan after two years. Thereafter Fariborz and the ruler of Aran fought several battles over possession of Darband until 1071, when Fariborz, having extracted hostages from the Darbandis, forced them to recognize his suzerainty. Afridun was then sent back to rule in Darband and, as the local dynasty had died out, the city and its surrounding territory were annexed to Shirvan.[34]

At the end of the eleventh century the Shirvan dynasty was in the doldrums, as neither of Fariborz's sons – Minuchehr III (1096–1106) or Afridun (1106–20) – was particularly distinguished. Afridun was installed as ruler of Darband several times, and as many times deposed by the emirs and magnates whose monopoly of power he challenged. 'At that time Darband was a gateway which bands of non-Muslim nomads – Kypchaks and others – burst through from time to time, undoubtedly as accomplices of the Darband emirs in attacking the rulers of Shirvan, so that Afridun, killed in battle…against such "infidels", could without exaggeration be considered a *shahīd* [martyr].'[35]

The Shirvanis, on their part, maintained continuous relations with Georgia – sometimes as enemies and sometimes as allies. Early in the twelfth century, when King Davit the Builder – conscious of the growing threat from the

Seljuqs advancing through Persia – attempted, on the one hand, to gain active support from Constantinople, by sending one daughter as a bride to the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (in fact she married Alexius's younger brother Isaac), and on the other hand, to strengthen his relations with Shirvan by sending another daughter, Tamar, to marry the shah, Minuchehr III, in 1111. Harmonious relations between these neighbouring states, however, did not last: the Shirvanis held to their Seljuq orientation, considering that Davit IV was meddling in their affairs, especially as he had just married a Kypchak Turkish princess, Gurandukht, whose father was a powerful khan in the northern steppe, and had permitted 40,000 Kypchaks and their families to move on to Georgian territory as a potential contingent of his army in the war against the Seljuqs. Afridun too had been tempted to seek favour with the Kypchaks, but, weighing up the advantages and hazards to Shirvan of the Kypchak alliance, he decided not to commit himself. His caution was vindicated when in 1117 King Davit, notwithstanding his alliance and family ties, sent his son Demetre to raid towns in Shirvan, then himself seized the city of Kabala and ravaged Shirvan territory widely. In 1120 war broke out between Shirvan and Darband, and Afridun was killed. Meanwhile, Davit won a series of victories over the Turks, culminating in the battle of Didgori (1121),[36] when

> an alliance between the Seljuk sultan and the largely Muslim merchants of Tbilisi, Gandja and Dmanisi… [backed by] Sultan Mahmud['s] organiz[ation of] a massive levy among the Muslims for a campaign against Georgia [was defeated by] the Georgians and their Armenian, Qipchaq, Osetin, and Shirvan allies… [in] what in Georgian history is known as *dzleva sakvirveli*, the 'wonderful victory', celebrated to this day as the holiday of *didgoroba* in mid-August.[37]

In the reign of the Shirvan-shah Ahsitan (1160–97) relations between Shirvan and Georgia became more peaceful for a time, with a Shirvani intervention helping to suppress an anti-Bagratid rebellion by the crown prince, Demna, and keep Giorgi III on the throne. Shirvan's economy, however, was badly damaged by a powerful earthquake in 1192, which destroyed Shamakha. After this Ahsitan decided to move his capital to Baku, with its commanding situation on a bay, and the Apsheron peninsula behind it (on which impressive new castles were now built) near the oil resources which already produced an important commodity in Shirvan's economy. Baku's coastal location also facilitated shipping links with the Dailam kingdom on the south Caspian coast, whose ruling Kakuyi family supplied Shirvan with a succession of viziers and experienced generals who reinforced the city's defences against Georgian attacks.[38] Ahsitan also strengthened his position in relation to Darband. He was already related to the Georgian royal family through his mother, and when he married ᶜIṣmah, whose parents were the emir of Darband and his consort (the latter's mother being Ahsitan's cousin and the niece of Giorgi III) he established bonds, as both an ally and a relation, between three ruling families.[39] ‘David the Builder gave deep consideration to the question of relations with Shirvan. After [Georgia's] annexation of Ḳakheti-Hereti Shirvan had become its immediate neighbour, and relations with the Shirvan-shah became very important…[His] daughter Tamar became the bride of Minuchehr, the son of Shirvan-shah Afridun…From then onward Shirvan was a vassal dependent on the…monarch of Georgia, and we may assume that it was at this time (the 1120s) that the Georgian kings added “Shah of Shirvan” to their title.’[40]

Relations between the Shirvan-shahs and the Turkish khanates south of the Araxes, clients of the Seljuqs, were more difficult – notwithstanding twentieth-century Azerbaijani historians' uninhibited practice of labelling on historical maps the whole region, from Darband and Shirvan in the north to Zanjan (if not Isfahan!) in the south, as 'Azerbaijan' over a period of 1,000 years, from the seventh century AD to the eighteenth – as if Azerbaijan proper (Media Atropatene) and Albania/Shirvan north of the Araxes had ever been (or shown the potential to become) united in a single nation-state, separate from Iran, at any time in that long period.[41]

Even a nationalistic Azerbaijani historian admits that in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries 'Shirvan was politically and economically separate from Azerbaijan and Arran, and mostly came under the influence of a powerful Georgia which, taking advantage of the civil strife in… Azerbaijan, started to interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbours. This suited…the rulers of Shirvan, as Georgia could back up Shirvan's hold over southern Daghestan.'[42] This scholar is honest in acknowledging the independence of Shirvan, its separateness from Azerbaijan proper, and the fact that Darband at this time was held by Shirvan. Clearly the ambitious Shams ad-Din Ildegiz, Turkish ruler of the 'atabeg state of Azerbaijan' which he had gathered in around his original *iqta* of Aran, would also covet Shirvan and lands to its north. As a twentieth-century historian of Shirvan explains, some later sources assert that in the first half of the twelfth century 'Sultan Mas^{c}ud . . brother of the Seljuq Toghryl II, sent Atabeg…Ildegiz with an army, and he quickly achieved the conquest of Arran, Ganja, Shirvan and Baku', but other historians doubt this report:

> Probably the seizure of Shirvan by Ildegiz and subsequently by Kyzyl Arslan did take place, but this

> was connected with their well-known Georgian campaigns, when Ildegiz routed the Georgian army and occupied the countries of Caucasus. The Georgian kings were interested in combining with the Shirvan state, which at that time was one of the most influential…in South Caucasia, because they were seeking a supporter…in their long struggle against the Seljuqs and atabegs, who had attacked Georgia several times in the twelfth century. In this complex international situation Ahsitan provided decisive aid to the Georgian king Giorgi III who was his cousin and whose niece was his wife. According to the Georgian chronicle, 'Ahsitan, the king of…Shirvan and the sea-coast from Darband to Khałkhał, treated Giorgi like a father…When this Shirvan-shah came under threat from the Khazars of Darband he appealed to the king, who gathered an army…and taking with him the Byzantine emperor's brother Andronicus, advanced to the Darband Gate, ravaged the Mushkurs districts… and occupied the town of Shabaran…which he handed over to his cousin, the Shirvan-shah'…Sharing the leadership of the Shirvani-Georgian army, they… repulsed a raid on Shirvan by a force of Rus [Scandinavian] pirates and Kypchaks.[43]

Ashurbeyli points out that the account of this 1174 campaign in Georgian chronicles scarcely mentions the role played by Ahsitan and the Shirvan army, but claims the credit for the Georgians and Andronicus, whereas the Shirvani panegyric poet Khaqani celebrates the victory over the invaders as a triumph for Ahsitan's warriors.

Meanwhile, Ahsitan is said to have pursued 'very wise and cautious policies' in relation to his neighbours. 'Observing the overwhelming power of the Seljuqs of Iraq, he paid them *kharāj* [the Islamic land-tax paid in kind] and minted coinage bearing their sultans' names. This vassalage, however, was purely formal, and from about 1025 right through to the Mongol invasion the Shirvan-shahs were sovereign, independent rulers of a strong, centralized state.'[44]

Georgia and Abkhazia

Histories of the early period frequently mention Georgia and Armenia in the same breath,[45] and the inter-relationship between their national cultures and royal houses was indeed intimate and complicated,[46] although the fundamental differences in language and Christian doctrines are so strong that there is no possibility of confusing these two nations and their histories. In the case of Georgia's relationship with another neighbouring people, however – the Abkhazians – the facts are elusive and their interpretation confused. Because of their location between the Caucasus mountains and the Black Sea, the principalities of Abkhazia and western Georgia (known in early times as Abazgia and Egrisi or Lazica) were less involved with Persia than were Iberia (eastern Georgia) and Armenia, but they had a long involvement with the Greeks and Romans. One account of the early centuries in western Georgia and Abkhazia contains the following information (greatly abridged in this summary):

> A Roman territory since Pompey's conquest, the [Caucasus]…experienced a brief flourishing in the mid-fifth century [AD] when Laz kings conquered Roman Colchis and founded the Kingdom of Lazica (Egrisi)…[In] the seventh century the Arabs and Byzantines began an intense struggle over Lazica and Abkhazeti…Leo, prince of Abkhazeti, revolted against Byzantium and conquered Lazica. By the middle of the

> ninth century, the kingdom of Abkhazeti in western Georgia had emerged as a more powerful political authority than…Kartli-Iberia…In 1008…Bagrat III became the first king of a united Abkhazeti and Kartli-Iberia…the two principal parts of Georgia were united, and…a new word, *sakartvelo*, came to be used to refer both to Kartli in the east and Egrisi in the west.[47]

Suny's account provides no more specific details than the phrases given here, but more explanation is essential, and will now be attempted.

Georgia's ethnic complexity reflects the basic geographical fact that as more than 80% of its territory is mountainous it falls into many separate regions, between which considerable climatic variations exist (see Map 16). Near Surami it is divided in two by the Likhi watershed, with Imereti, Racḥa, Lechkhumi, Megrelia and Svaneti to the west, and Kartli, Ḳakheti and other provinces to the east. In eastern Georgia, in the basin of the Mtkvari/Kura and the southern uplands, there are relatively few serious natural barriers, except for the Mtkvari's turbulent northern tributaries flowing down from the Great Caucasus – the Liakhvi, Ksani, Aragvi, Iori and Alazani, in whose upper valleys live the Georgian mountain tribes of Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes. To the south-west of Kartli the watershed continues in the Meskhi range, south of which lie the Georgian provinces of Acḥara (Ajaria), Meskheti, Javakheti, Trialeti and Somkheti on the upper reaches of the Mtkvari, and formerly Klarjeti and Ṭao on the Armenian plateau now held by Turkey.[48] (The multiplicity of regional names – all formerly independent principalities – is somewhat daunting, but they are still commonly used today, and their distinctiveness is reflected in characteristic local surname forms.)[49]

In contrast with the continental climate of Armenia and the Anatolian plateau, which are hot and dry in summer and very cold in winter, most of Georgia receives rain from the Black Sea at all seasons. The high Caucasus causes heavy precipitation, particularly on its southern side, where Colchis receives between 1,000 and 2,000 mm per year, and the mountainous parts of Svaneti, Mingrelia and Abkhazia have over 2,000 mm. As this side of the range is also the steepest and nearest to the sea, the rivers are swift-flowing and turbulent.[50] Consequently, overland travel from west Georgia north-westward to Abkhazia, through the upland areas of northern Kartli, Mingrelia and Svaneti, then along the Black Sea coast, is hindered by a combination of steep mountain spurs and deeply cut river beds. These transverse barriers along the south-west front of the Great Caucasus played a significant part in the relationship between Georgia (the land of the Megrelians, Kartvelians and others) and Abkhazia (the land of the Abkhaz people) – involving controversial questions of ethnic origins and politics which caused long-suppressed antagonisms to erupt in the last years of the twentieth century.

One essential fact is that the languages of the Abkhazians and the Georgians are quite unrelated to each other, for instance in vocabulary:

	Abkhaz	**Georgian**

	Abkhaz	**Georgian**
woman	apkhwys	kali
good	bzia	ḳargi
to eat	fo	cḥams
one	aka	erti
two	öba	ori
three	khpa	sami

As with the majority of languages spoken in the Caucasus, Abkhazian and Georgian share certain common features, but resemble each other as little as, for instance, English and Welsh or Greek.[51]

Georgians and Abkhazians also differ in their social customs, as a nineteenth-century Georgian historian noted: ‘In ancient times the Georgians did not bury their dead in the earth, but exposed them on trees, as the Abkhazes still do today.’[52] This observation suggests a Kartlian assumption of superiority over the Abkhazes (and other western neighbours in Megrelia and Svaneti):

> In comparison with the developed provinces of eastern Georgia, the lowlands of Colchis…were on a significantly lower level of social and economic

> development. Their backwardness had been aggravated by the havoc of the Roman–Pontic wars… and thereafter…the mountain tribes of Colchis had almost unlimited opportunities for raiding throughout the eastern Black Sea territory. Dominating the local population by their violence, the mountaineers initiated the barbarization of the socially more advanced but now economically ruined and politically disrupted lowland provinces.

According to this Georgian historian, it was because of the primeval 'rejuvenating force' from the mountains that

> at the turn of the second century AD throughout Colchis's Black Sea coastlands…there arose early states headed by rulers of local origin (the kingdom of Lazica and the semi-states of the Abazgs and the Apsils). At their low socio-economic level their political evolution was retarded by such external factors as the prolonged wars between Persia and Byzantium in the sixth to seventh centuries…followed by the devastating Arab invasion. At that point the Abkhazian Kingdom emerged in the Transcaucasian arena.[53]

The same work concedes that (100 years after this 'emergence') the eighth-century native ruler of the Abkhazian Kingdom, Levan II, was not a Georgian but 'most probably' an Abkhaz, in accordance with normal practice in the Roman Empire, 'which selected protégés from the native aristocracy for appointment as [its colonial] administrators'.[54] Confirmed by Constantinople as hereditary ruler of the subject principality of Abkhazia, Levan was also a grandson of the king of Khazaria, and it was probably with the latter's help that he defected from the Greeks, seized power in

Abkhazia and Egrisi, and proclaimed himself king of his own people, the Abkhazians. That this was annexation by force appears to be confirmed by an early Armenian translation of the same Georgian chronicle.[55] As the idea that an Abkhaz prince could have conquered by force a principality previously subject to Georgia is unpalatable to Georgians, this commentator contradicts himself by concluding that 'the event described in the *Kartli Chronicle* should be interpreted as the peaceful unification of Abkhazia and Egrisi'.[56]

However, the Georgian nationalists' premise of Abkhazia's lower cultural level at that period is not self-evident, so that recently published accounts of early Abkhaz history written by Abkhazians are particularly useful.[57] Abkhazia lay close to Graeco-Roman colonies of some importance and long standing, established around the Sea of Azov (Latin 'Mæotis Palus') from the sixth century BC – Phanagoreia, Panticapaeum, Hermonassa and others. In relation to these centres of culture Colchis was certainly not off the beaten track. Dioscurias (near present-day Sukhum) was only 250 miles from the densely colonized Kerch Strait and lower Kuban, and the Greek ports of Gorgipia and Torik (near Anapa, Novorossiysk and Gelenjik) were less than 100 miles away, so that for such experienced sailors as the Greeks the peoples they knew as the Heniochs (living near the coastal town of Pityus, presumably today's Pitsunda), Abazgians and Zichs lay within easy reach.[58] Looking south, Abkhazia was also relatively near the Greek Pontus colonies around Trapezus (Trebizond) on the north coast of Asia Minor. In fact, in Roman times,

> Colchis, the western…[part of Georgia], was more civil [whereas] Iberia, over the mountains of Likhi [to the east], was more rusticated…[with] a harder, rougher

> way of life…[As one went] eastward, from the busy ports of Colchis…into the agricultural plain of Iberia… Colchis was…a part…of the Graeco-Roman civilization which was spread round the shores of the Black Sea from…the Danube to the Caucasian Mountains…[Colchis] was, indeed, for some decades…included in the Bosporan kingdom of the Roman clients, Polemon and Pythodoris. Iberia remained the rougher land…its kings, cadets of the Persian royal houses and veering in their politics between the Roman Emperors and the Court of Ctesiphon.[59]

The Caucasian lands farthest to the north-west belonged to people speaking Circassian (Adyg) languages, which are related to those of the Abkhazian–Abaza peoples. It is unknown whether the Abkhazians and Abaza originally formed a single people which subsequently divided, or were always distinct, but it seems probable that about AD 1300 the Black Sea coast Abazas began to move over the mountains to the northern side, where they now live near the Adygs. This question is relevant to the present day because of the attempt made by Georgian nationalists to prove the opposite: that originally the ancestors of both the Abazas and the Abkhazians lived *north* of the mountains, so that the latter are relative newcomers to the Black Sea coast, into which they supposedly migrated as recently as the seventeenth century.[60]

The enigmatic process by which an Abkhaz prince, Levan Chachba (in Georgian ‘Anchabadze’) became ruler of an ethnically Abkhazian kingdom early in the eighth century, and this realm then became the ‘Kingdom of Abkhazia’, an all-*Georgian* state, under Bagrat III Bagrationi, in AD 1008, is attributed by Allen to ‘a series of dynastic accidents and the skill of the Eristavi [governor]…Marushidze’.[61] As an analogy for this transfer of the name of a small, ethnically distinct country to its larger neighbour, a Georgian writer recently proposed the accession of Kenneth MacAlpine, King of Scots, to the throne of the larger land of the Picts, when Pictland lost its name and adopted that of Scotland.[62] Since facts about ninth-century Picts and Scots are as few as those about contemporary Abkhazians and Megrelians, a better-documented parallel might be imagined: in the fifteenth century, after the inheritance of the English throne by a descendant of the Welsh soldier Owain Tudwr, alias Henry VII – what if the new dynasty in England had not only adopted the Welsh name Tudor (as it did),[63] but England itself had been renamed ‘Wales’ forever after? This (to most English people, absurd) hypothetical metamorphosis would resemble events in Georgia as recounted by Vakhushti Bagrationi (1696–1757), Georgia's first modern historian:[64]

> [In the seventh century] the [Byzantine] Emperor Heraclius reoccupied Egrisi…and appointed a governor in Anakopia, calling him the governor of Abkhazia…[When the Arab general] Marwan the Deaf attacked Anakopia the governor was Levan…[whom subsequently] the emperor confirmed as permanent governor…After the death of this Levan it was his nephew, also Levan [II], the son of the Khazar king's daughter, who succeeded him…After the death of [the Iberian princes] Ioann and Juansher [AD 807] Levan II seceded [from Byzantium] and…seized the whole of Egrisi, from the Likhi mountains to the [Caspian] sea and Khazaria, and in 786…proclaimed himself king of the Abkhazes…[reviving the royal title which had been replaced in the sixth century by the non-hereditary

> Georgian office of *eristavi* 'governor']…And when this Levan…seized all of Egrisi he no longer called it Egrisi, but Abkhazia, and divided…it into seven provinces. This Levan also built the city…of Kutaisi and made it the capital of the king of the Abkhazes, second to Anakopia [the Byzantine administrative centre]. Presumably it was also Levan who with the permission of the Greeks made the Abkhaz catholicos independent. Levan imposed order on Abkhazia and oversaw everything and, after a good reign, died in 806.[65]

Vakhushti's account continues the history of the 'Abkhazian Kingdom' up to the tenth century, when

> After the death of King Demetrios [III] the Abkhazes, at a loss for a royal successor, resorted to Theodosios the Blind and enthroned him as [their] king…However, because the Abkhazes' mores became corrupted after he had reigned for six years, they asked King Davit the Curopalate to send Bagrat the son of Gurgen [of Iberia], the son of a daughter of the Abkhazian king Giorgi, to be king of the Abkhazes…and he was blessed as King [Bagrat III] in Kutaisi in AD 985. After him the Bagrationi succession was firmly established in Abkhazia.[66]

Thus Georgia became a united kingdom – which, however, for some 400 years thereafter called itself 'the Kingdom of Abkhazia', which was known by that title in relations with foreign countries, and citizens of which even referred to their own language, Georgian, as Abkhazian.[67]

The main difficulty with this account is Abkhazia's transmutation, as an ethnically Abazgi/Abkhaz principality, into the Georgian kingdom (nominally ‘Abkhazia’) in which, ostensibly, by the late eighth century the Kartvelian, Georgian, element greatly predominated numerically, culturally and linguistically, while the ethnic Abkhazes in their homeland in the north-west remained a minority.[68] However, the historical sources do not explicitly specify the ethnic origins of the ‘Abkhazian’ dynasty. Rulers before Levan II all bear Greek names, but Georgians assert that he and his successors were of the Bagrationi or Laz dynasty.[69] Presumably, despite the fact that for four centuries the whole Georgian Kingdom was known by the name ‘Abkhazia’, in their homeland the Abkhazes themselves remained a distinct ethnic majority, to whom the language not only of government, but also of the Orthodox Church liturgy, was a foreign tongue – Georgian[70] – which, however, from the Kartlian viewpoint expressed an ‘all-Georgian’ national identity. According to a modern Abkhazian account, from the ninth century to the fifteenth Georgian was used increasingly in Abkhazia, for official purposes ousting Greek, which had been widespread until then. At the same time, Abkhazian was still widely used in the Georgian settlements on the Colchis coast. Since the Abkhazians (eventually converted from Christianity to Islam by Muslim missionaries from Turkey) survived as a people within the small Georgian empire where princes constantly fought among themselves, it seems probable that in their Abkhazian homeland to the north-west they were left largely to their own devices.[71]

Indeed, Vakhushti confirms that the Abkhazes proper continued to exist as a people separate from both east and west Georgians – albeit recruited from time to time by Georgian warlords as troops in their internecine conflicts.

Some of the indigenous Abkhazians also fought on their own account – for instance, attacking Guria by ship, while the notorious Levan Dadiani of Megrelia plundered the Abkhaz and destroyed their ships.[72] One later Russian historian dared to suggest that, of all the Colchian peoples, only the Abkhaz had not only benefited materially from their proximity to the Graeco-Roman colonies and ancient trade routes, but had also thereby gained a special understanding which enabled Abkhazia to act as a cultural intermediary between the West and the East.[73]

Another specifically Abkhazian matter which indicates that the Georgian rulers of the 'Abkhazian Kingdom' were familiar with the Abkhaz language (no surprise in polyglot Caucasia, where bilingualism was common) is the fact that since the thirteenth century Queen Tamar's son has been known as Giorgi IV 'Lasha' – usually translated 'the Resplendent'. The epithet *lasha*, far from being Georgian, is an Abkhazian word meaning 'clear' or 'bright' – but the question why this non-Georgian designation was used for a popular Georgian king (suggesting a special relationship with ethnic Abkhazia) seems to be avoided by Georgian historians.[74]

Daghestan and north-east Caucasus

The mountainous area of Daghestan (omitting its large lowland areas around the lower Terek), plus the neighbouring mountains of Chechenia and north-eastern Georgia, is less than half the size of Scotland, and considerably less than the US states of Vermont and New Hampshire taken together. However, most of Daghestan and Chechenia lies at over 3,000 feet, with nearly sixty peaks rising to between 6,000 and 16,000 feet, and correspondingly deep and difficult gorges and mountain passes. Consequently, foreign visitors saw Daghestan as a forbidding land where wild terrain and harsh climate made living conditions difficult, and the prevailing tribal ways made it dangerous and lawless. And indeed, with its multi-ethnic population speaking many different languages and dialects, and their customs of vengeance and blood-feuds, violent conflicts were frequent. Nevertheless it would be wrong to consider this as a land where continuous, unregulated chaos reigned. There was a rough system, with socio-political institutions based on the norms of customary law and *shari^cah*, providing a framework for government and justice. Keeping the peace, however, was always made difficult by the many potential causes of conflict arising from Daghestan's geographical, social and ethnic diversity.

Daghestan embraced six independent, largely tribal principalities, the most prestigious rulers of which in the sixteenth century were the Tarki *shamkhal* of Kazi-Kumukh (Lak and Kumuk), the emir of Darband (Kumuk), the *utsmi* of Kaitag (Kumuk, but including Dargans, Lezgis, Tats and Mountain Jews), the *nutsal* of the Avars, the *ma^csum* of Tabasaran, and the Nogay Turk community of Tümen on the lower Terek (see Map 17).[75] The origin of the names Kumukh, Kumuk and Kumyk remains unknown, and although the Kumuk people as a Turkic-speaking political community on the lower Terek plain was formed by the thirteenth century, no reference is made to them in early medieval sources. It is believed that the Kazi-Kumukh Shamkhalate's earliest rulers were not Turkic-speakers, but Laks. The reason for the elusiveness of the Kumuks may be that, as their northern territory lay on the southern edge of the Kypchak steppe, they were prevented from developing their own state until the sixteenth century by the dominance of the

Kypchaks, the Golden Horde and Timurlenk.[76] Like the rulers of the bigger states of South Caucasus, these local potentates made war alliances against some of their neighbours, and arranged dynastic marriages with those potentially useful in their political intrigues, such as the shah of Shirvan. Even the Georgians did not hold entirely aloof from the Daghestanis: the sixteenth-century monarch of Kakheti, Levan, married a daughter of the *shamkhal*.[77]

When faced with invasion by an outside force, Daghestani rulers withdrew as far as possible into their mountain strongholds and strengthened their defences. Smaller communities too were vigilant, and exerted their will to defend themselves and maintain self-government and independence of their larger neighbours.[78] In their land of high mountains and isolated valleys, Daghestani native communities were frequently in conflict with each other, particularly over pastures, and this endemic strife led to the building of high defensive stone towers and village-fortresses clustered on inaccessible slopes and ridges. Avaristan, the homeland of the Avars, one of the most influential nations, is particularly isolated, being

> almost completely cut off on all sides by impassible mountains – the Andi, Salatau, Gimri and other ranges. Within these barriers it is divided by four tributaries of the river Sulak – the Avar Koisu, Kazikumukh Koisu, Andi Koisu and Black Koisu – and by numerous lateral ridges branching off from the main Caucasus range. It was these formidable natural boundaries between the various parts of Avaria, and the dominance of a barter economy, which were formerly themain causes of the prolonged isolation of the Avar-Andi-Tsez group of peoples and the survival

> among them of a large number of languages and dialects.[79]

Nevertheless, Daghestan as a whole was not an isolated region, but one of the principal markets in the Caucasus. The mountain villages had to import grain and other foodstuffs, but they could offer in exchange products of the crafts for which they were famous throughout the Middle East – carpets, jewellery, decorated metalwork and weapons made in the Dargo village, Kubachi.[80]

While the most powerful Daghestani states were relatively centralized hereditary khanates, other, smaller ethnic communities in which many Daghestanis lived seemed to suggest earlier times when political independence and personal freedom had prevailed. However, despite the communist simplification that before the nineteenth century there were only two social classes in Daghestani society – the exploiting ‘feudals’ and the enslaved peasantry – the historical facts were far more complex, with several classes, ranging from slaves (mainly prisoners of war), through serfs (Arabic *ra*^{c}*iyat*) bound to their masters’ estates, peasants enjoying personal freedom (*uzden*s), a growing category of ‘prosperous *uzden*s’ merging into the lower ranks of *beg*s or service gentry, the land-owning hereditary *beg*s, and at the apex the feudal lords.[81] In fact, ‘The great majority of the peasantry in Daghestan were members of free communes.’ In feudal domains the serfs were subject to exploitation by corvée and quit-rent, but in the free communes, where practically everyone was an *uzden*, they were more like freemen.[82]

Each of these ‘free societies’ and ‘unions of free communes’ was an independent community, clustered around a small town. The Lak townships in the south (where the first ‘free unions of village communes’ were probably formed in the thirteenth century) included Akhty, Rutul, Kurakh, Khiv, Küra, Khnov and Tpig, among which Tsakhur enjoyed special status.[83] According to one historian,

> The determining feature of society among the peoples of Daghestan…was the exceptional cohesion of the village commune, which always…stood out against the demands of the feudal rulers. The stability of the rural territorial commune is the key to…many [aspects] of…life in Daghestan…Attempts by landowners to subjugate rural communities encountered determined resistance by the village communes and unions.[84]

The peasants in unions of village communes were considered to own as personal property land that had been transferred to them, but while they were formally considered to be freemen, they still owed various services to a landlord.[85]

While Islam was imposed on the people of Darband and southern Daghestan in the eighth century, the conversion of the other communities was a lengthy process. Most Kumuks were not Muslims until the twelfth century, and the Avars remained Christian until the fourteenth, although they came under the rule of Muslim viceroys at an early stage. However, by the fifteenth century Islam had also taken over in southern and central Daghestan. The Lak people's special fervour in imposing Islam upon their neighbours was acknowledged by the Arabs, who called them *ghazi*s – fighters for the faith – and this title was incorporated in the name of their territory, Ghazi-Kumukh, which became the centre of Islam in Daghestan, giving the Laks a special prestige which was further boosted four centuries later when they became fanatical propagators of the Murid movement.[86]

North-western Caucasus

The region of the Caucasus least affected by Islam before the fifteenth century was the north – Circassia, Alania/Osetia and Chechenia and Ingushia (the Vaynakh peoples) – which, thanks to the protection of the mountains, escaped prolonged raiding by the Arabs and Seljuqs.

Circassia included all the land north of the Great Caucasus from the Black Sea to the confluence of the Sunzha and Terek (its eastern part being Kabarda), extending almost as far north as Rostov-on-Don and the Manych valley, as well as the coastal region from the Azov Sea to the Inguri, including Abkhazia.[87] It was a varied land, with agriculture, growing mainly millet and barley, in the valleys and fertile uplands, pastures in the steppe, hunting and bee-keeping among the deciduous forests, and high pastures in the mountains; the climate along the Black Sea coast favoured the growing of fruit and vegetables. In the lowlands people lived in thatched wattle-and-daub houses surrounded by fences, clustered within outer stockades; in forested mountain regions there were wooden or stone houses, but nowhere did they have the stone-built fortified villages and defensive towers which were typical of Daghestan and Chechenia-Ingushia.[88] The Circassians of Taman peninsula, between the Azov and Black Seas, had been converted to Christianity in the fourth century and fell under the sway of the Byzantine Empire and the patriarchate of Constantinople from the sixth. As church services conducted in Greek did not have wide appeal, however, Animist beliefs and practices, such as blood sacrifice at sacred trees, persisted, especially in the mountains. Much later, the Vatican also became interested in gaining converts in Circassia through the presence of the Venetian and Genoese trading colonies which flourished in Crimea and Circassia during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.[89]

The formation in the centre of the Caucasus of the Osetian people with their Iranian language arose from the immigration of nomads from the Volga–Caspian steppes. It is surmised that these were Alans, pushed southward off the lowland pastures into the valleys and gorges of the central Caucasus between the sixth and tenth centuries AD by the pressure of other Eurasian nomads. In the eleventh century the Kypchak Turks drove many more Circassians and Alans into the mountains, where they presumably mixed with previously established communities. Thousands of Kypchaks were also given free passage through Alania on their way to serve King Davit of Georgia in the twelfth century, and some of these also settled among the Alans and Circassians. The Alans were first Christianized in the sixth century, and in the twelfth this Byzantine conversion was reinforced by the Georgian Orthodox Church, which built churches in Osetia. Osetian settlement in the high valleys began at an early period, but probably became a mass movement during the Mongol invasions, which devastated the lowlands, as did later raiding by Timurlenk, who systematically pillaged Circassia, Chechenia and Daghestan.[90]

An important feature of Osetia's geography was that, despite its very mountainous terrain, including Kazbek (16,500 feet) and Uilpata (15,250 feet), it was relatively open to passage across the Great Caucasus, with about ten arduous crossings east of the river Urukh on the seventy-mile border with Georgia. West of this, where more than forty of the highest ridges and peaks of the range, including Jangitau (16,600 feet), Dykhtau (17,000 feet) and Elbrus (18,500 feet), are crowded on 140 miles of Georgian border, there were only four passes.[91] In search of territory, over the centuries many Alan–Osetians crossed the Great Caucasus and settled in the valleys of Georgia to the south, thus forming a second community south of the range. Russian communist accounts, seeking a spurious inter-ethnic harmony, depicted this as a peaceful migration welcomed by the kings of Kartli, but it was probably more of an armed incursion, during which the Osetians occupied some lower areas for a time, including the town of Gori. King Giorgi V (1314–46) drove them back towards the mountains, where they settled in gorges both south and north of the main range, which the Georgians called Dvaleti (from the Osetian tribal name Tuailag).[92] They were his vassals but maintained contact with their northern compatriots, some of whom continued to move south in later centuries. From time to time the Georgian kings reasserted suzerainty over these southern Osetians and exacted tribute from them, as Vakhtang VI still did in 1711.[93]

Among the inhabitants of the high Caucasus, the Balkar and Karachay peoples present an enigma. In fact they form one people, divided by the Elbrus massif and the Malka–Kuban watershed, but speaking the same Turkic language, Karachay-Balkar, and sharing the same culture and (hypothetical) early history.[94] In contrast to the Osetians, the Karachay-Balkars are cut off from communication with the south, and they are entirely surrounded by non-Turkic peoples: Osetians to the east, Circassians to north and west, and Abkhazians and Georgians to the south. As Balkar and Karachay historians point out, any explanation of how these Turkic-speaking tribes – whose affiliation would seem to be with nomads of the Eurasian steppes – became settled in the high Caucasus brings into question some of the assumptions about origins outlined above:

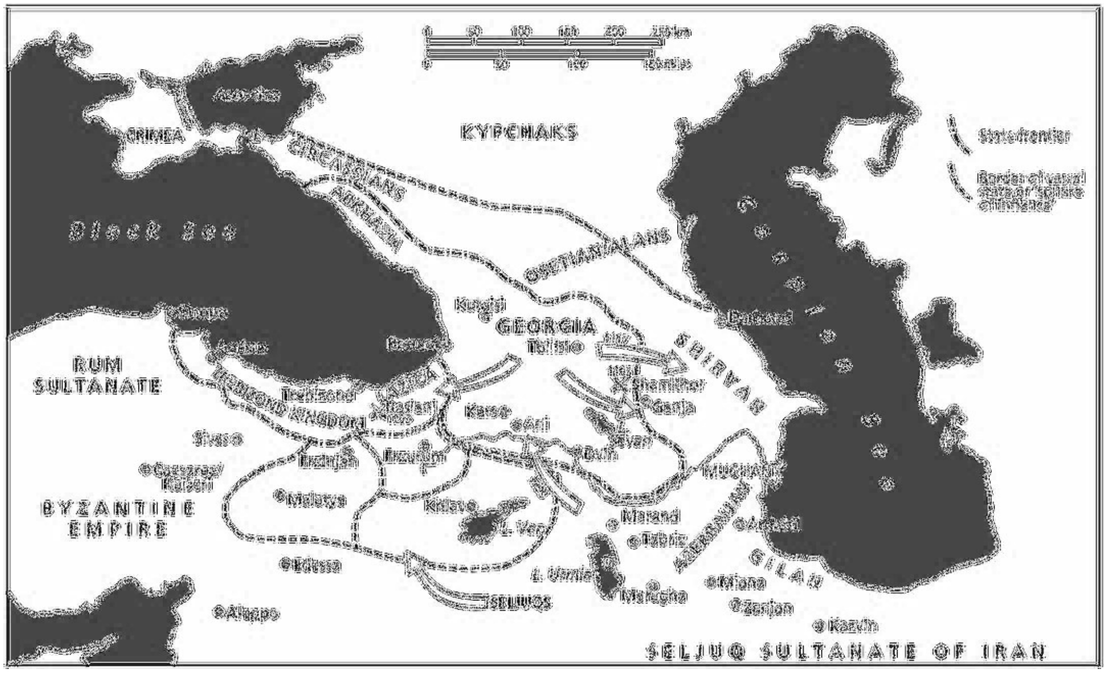
> [H]ow did a Turkic language and its [anthropologically European] speakers appear on the crest of the Caucasus, tightly encircled by other languages and cultures? The supposition that this did not occur until the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, after…Timur's raids…lacks any scholarly foundation. It would have been practically impossible to colonize the high mountain areas of the central Caucasus by passing through other peoples who had ostensibly lived there since ancient times.[95]

The Balkar-Karachays – whose neighbours call them (and not the Osetians) 'Alans' – advance a different theory, related to twentieth-century Turkish nationalism. This asserts that, so far from being relative late-comers, pushed into the mountains by Kypchaks and Mongols, the Alans were among the earliest autochthonous inhabitants of the Caucasus, subsequently invaded by and intermixed with Turkic pastoralists from the fourth century BC. Contrary to the assumption that the Alans were Indo-Europeans, they were Turkic tribes related to the Bulgars – which would explain the name 'Balkar' as a variant of 'Bulgar', as well as the presence of many Turkic elements in the language and culture of their west Osetian neighbours, whose name 'Digor' is also probably Turkic.[96] This still does not explain the role of the Osetians, and the most that another account can suggest is that in the fifteenth century 'the Balkars pushed [the Alans] out of the gorges lying to the east of Elbrus', taking the place of the Osetians, who thereafter, from their new location on the Shtula pass, continued to harry the Balkars.[97]

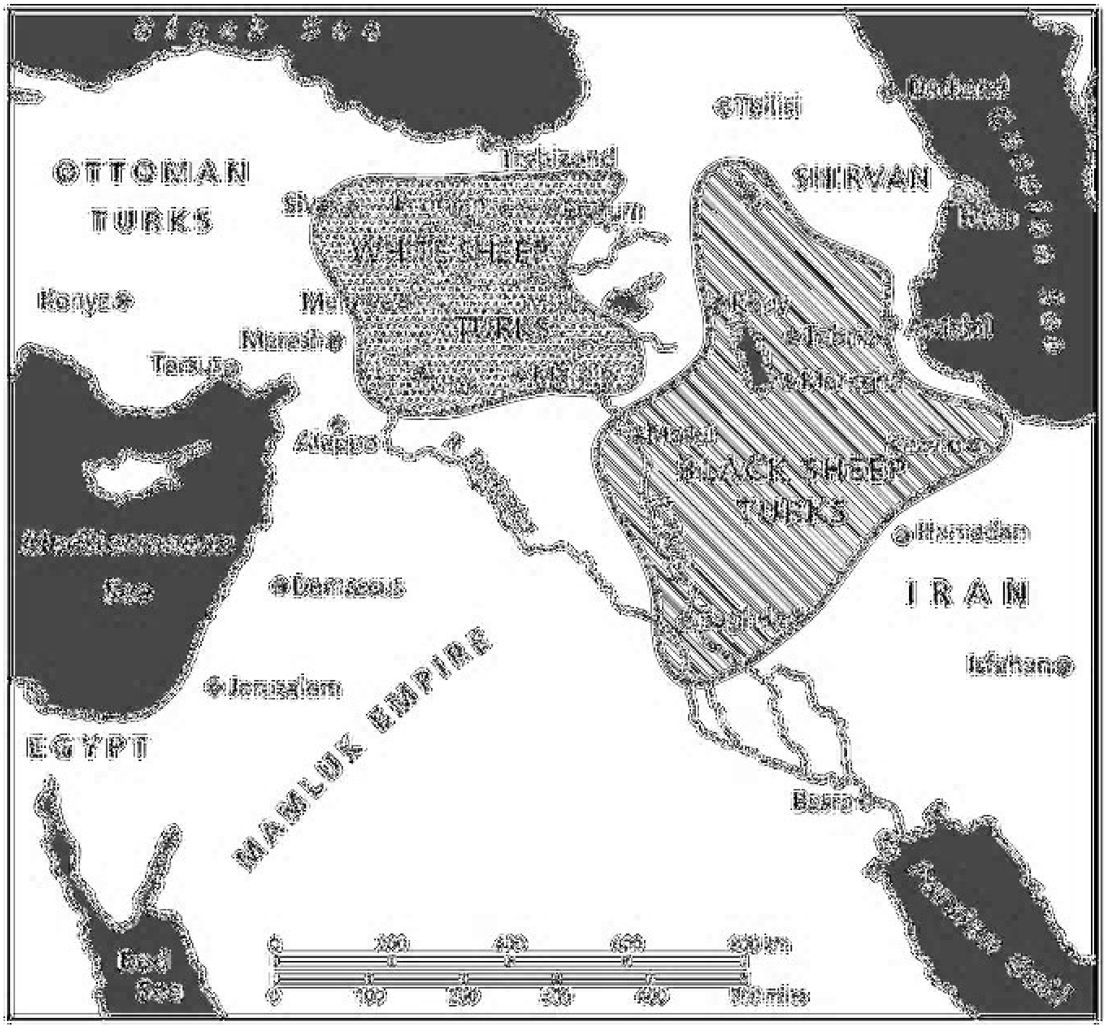
Caucasia between the Black Sea and the Caspian

In the early sixteenth century the lands of north-western Caucasus and Daghestan, lying between the Caspian on the east and the Black Sea on the west, were as much exposed as south Caucasia was to pressure from the Persians and the Turks (see Map 18). The Caspian Sea was considered by the Persians to belong to them, and since the Ottoman annexation of Constantinople and the Danubian lands of Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and southern Ukraine the Black Sea was practically a Turkish lake. The former Kypchak steppe north of the Black Sea, reaching from the Dnepr to the Don (and extending much farther east beyond the Volga into the semi-deserts north of the Caspian and Aral Seas) which had been under the rule of the Golden Horde until the disintegration of the Mongol Empire in the fifteenth century, and belonged thereafter to the Tatar khanates of Crimea, Astrakhan, Nogay and Kazan. While the last three were subjugated by Russia in the 1550s, the Crimean Tatar Khanate, a vassal of the Ottoman Empire since 1475, continued to occupy and guard the steppe between the Crimean peninsula and the narrow Don–Volga watershed. This great plain – some 1,000 miles from west to east – was open to all the nomadic peoples roaming the Eurasian steppes, from the Nogays, Turkmens and Kalmyks in the sixteenth century to the great Kazak hordes of the eighteenth. It also provided a highway for the Crimeans to collect slaves from Circassia, or for Turkish armies, whenever Istanbul decided to send expeditions to impose the sultan's authority over the peoples of North Caucasus.

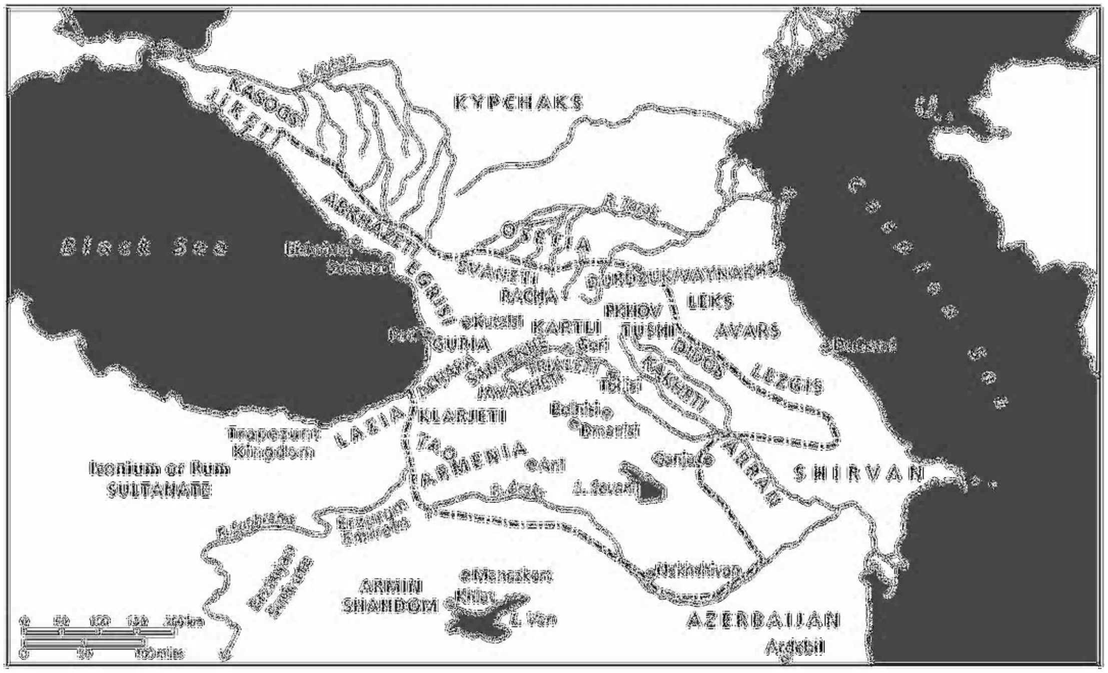
One of the most regular commercial activities in the Caucasus was the capture of slaves for sale in Muslim lands. At first Genoese merchants in their Black Sea colonies acted as agents procuring slaves from Circassia, but in the fifteenth century this trade was taken over by the Crimean Tatars, as vassals of the Ottoman Turks; in the eastern Caucasus the slave trade had its centre at Darband. Some slaves were obtained from Greece, Georgia, Russia or the Kypchaks, but many came from Circassia, whose young people were much in demand for army, household and harem. While Daghestani rulers frequently raided their non-Muslim neighbours to capture slaves, in Georgia and Circassia it was not uncommon for parents to sell their own children into slavery. Under Islamic law, life as a slave did not necessarily mean misery and degradation, and many Circassian boys sold into the Egyptian sultan's Mamluk army made good careers and attained high rank – notably the fourteenth-century Sultan Barkuk. During the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517), indeed, political power in Cairo was held by the slave army, which was dominated by Circassians – until their arrogance, corruption and conservatism in military matters led to the destruction of the Mamluk régime by the Ottomans in the sixteenth century.[98]


KYPCHAKS
CRIMEA
CIRCASSIANS
ABKHAZIA
Black Sea
OSSETIAN ALANS
GEORGIA
Kutaisi
Tbilisi
Derbend
SHIRVAN
Shamkhor
Ganja
RUM SULTANATE
Trebizond
Kars
Ani
Sivas
Dvin
Erzurum
Melitene
Khlat
L. Van
Marand
Tabriz
Edessa
L. Urmia
Maragha
Miana
Zanjan
Aleppo
SELJUQS
Kazvin
BYZANTINE EMPIRE
GILAN
SELJUQ SULTANATE OF IRAN
State frontier

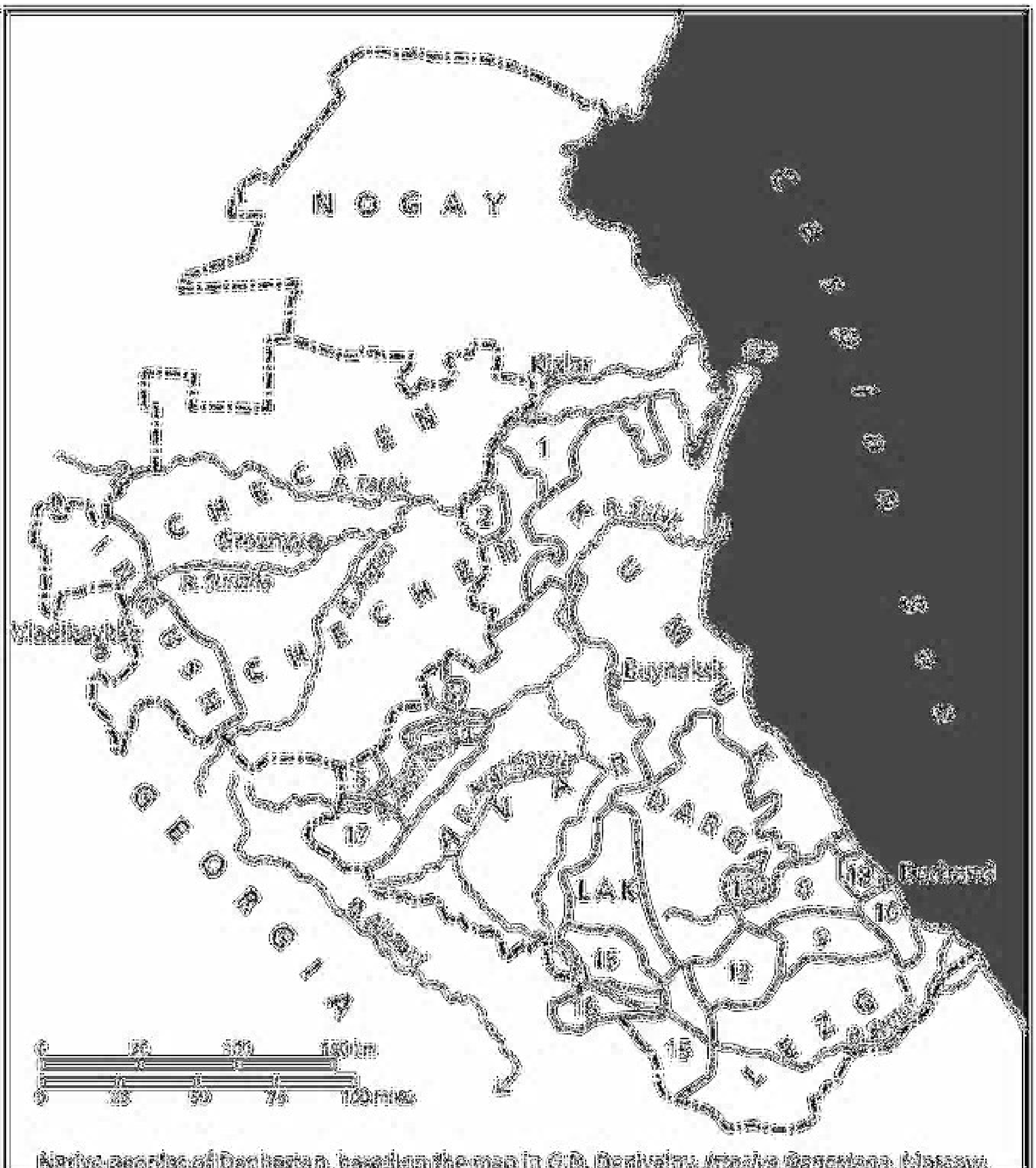
Map 14 Medieval Georgia at the height of its power and expansion against Shirvan and Azerbaijan, and its influence over the Abkhazians, Circassians and nomadic peoples of the northern steppes; in the south the Seljuq hordes advancing from Iran attack Armenia and the Byzantine Empire.


Black Sea
OTTOMAN TURKS
Trebizond
Sivas
Erzurum
WHITE SHEEP TURKS
Konya
Malatya
Marash
Tarsus
Aleppo
R. Euphrates
Mediterranean Sea
Damascus
Jerusalem
EGYPT
MAMLUK EMPIRE
Red Sea
Tbilisi
Derbent
SHIRVAN
Baku
Caspian Sea
Tabriz
Ardabil
Maragha
Mosul
Qazvin
BLACK SHEEP TURKS
Hamadan
IRAN
Baghdad
Isfahan
Basra
Persian Gulf
0 200 400 600 800 km
0 100 200 300 400 500 miles

Map 15 South Caucasus and Western Iran: Black Sheep and White Sheep Turks about AD 1435.


KYPCHAKS
KASOGS
JIKETI
ABKHAZETI
Black Sea
EGRISI
OSETIA
R. Terek
SVANETI
RACHA
DURDZUKS/VAYNAKHS
LEKS
Kutaisi
KARTLI
PKHOV
TUSHI
AVARS
Derbent
Caspian Sea
GURIA
SAMTSKHE
Gori
TRIALETI
JAVAKHETI
Tbilisi
DIDOS
KAKHETI
LEZGIS
Trapezunt
Kingdom
LAZIA
KLARJETI
Bolnisi
Dmanisi
TAO
ARMENIA
Ani
Ganja
ARRAN
SHIRVAN
Iconium or Rum
SULTANATE
R. Araks
L. Sevan
R. Euphrates
Erzurum
Emirate
Nakhchivan
ARMIN
SHAHDOM
Manazkert
Khlat
L. Van
AZERBAIJAN
Ardebil
0 50 100 150 200 km
0 50 100 miles

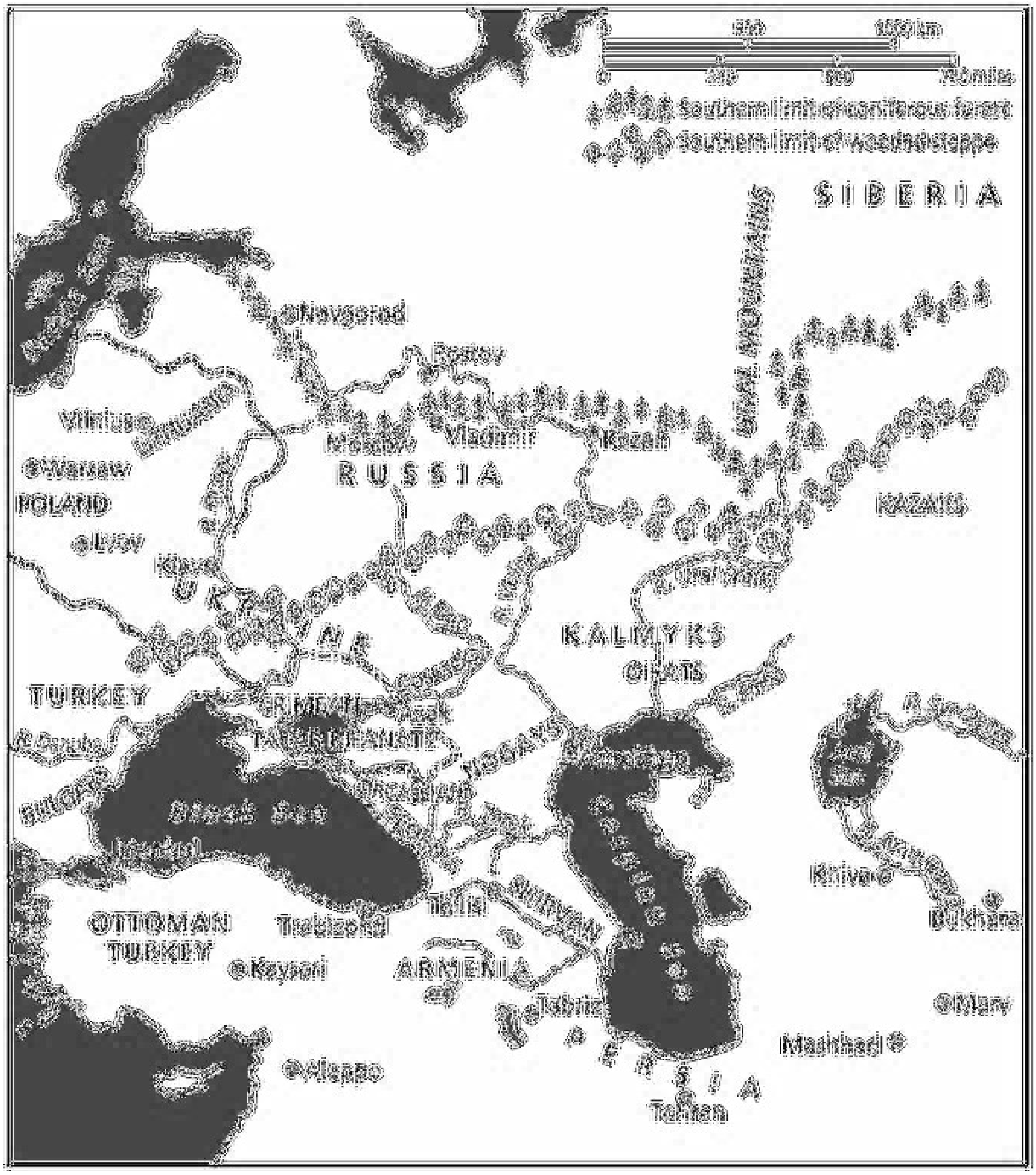
Map 16 The Georgian state by the fifteenth century.


NOGAY
CHECHEN
INGUSH
GEORGIA
AVAR
DARGI
KUMYK
LAK
LEZGI
CASPIAN SEA
Kizlar
Groznyy
Vladikavkaz
Buynaksk
Derbent
R. Terek
R. Sunzha
R. Sulak
R. Samur
0 50 100 150 km
0 25 50 75 100 miles

Native peoples of Daghestan, based on the map in G.D. Daniyalov, *Istoriya Dagestana*, Moscow, 1967, vol.I, p.304. Of the 27 native peoples and languages shown on the original map only 9 are named on the present map. Other smaller communities are indicated by numbers.

1	Nogays	12	Aguls
2	Kumyks/Kumuks	13	Kubachis (a very small community, but important as craftsmen specialising in metalwork, particularly weapons)
3	Avars	15	Rutuls
5	Andis	16	Tsakhurs
6	Kaytags	17	Didoys
9	Tabasarans	18	Azeris
10	Mountain Jews and Tats		

Map 17 Native peoples of Daghestan, based on the map in *Istoriya Dagestana*, edited by G. D. Daniyalor, *et al.*, 3 vols., Moscow, 1967–8 vol. I, p. 304.


0 500 1000 km
0 250 500 750 miles
Southern limit of coniferous forest
Southern limit of wooded steppe
SIBERIA
URAL MOUNTAINS
Novgorod
Rostov
Vilnius
Lithuania
Warsaw
POLAND
Lvov
Moscow
Vladimir
Kazan
RUSSIA
KAZAKS
Kiev
UKRAINE
KALMYKS
OIRATS
TURKEY
CRIMEAN TATAR KHANATE
NOGAYS
Astrakhan
CIRCASSIANS
BULGARS
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
Istanbul
OTTOMAN TURKEY
Trebizond
Tbilisi
SHIRVAN
ARMENIA
Kayseri
Tabriz
PERSIA
Tehran
Mashhad
Merv
Khiva
Bukhara
Aleppo

Map 18 The Caucasus between the Asian plains and north-eastern Europe, fourteenth–fifteenth centuries.

[1] Presumably 'Persian' here signifies Seljuq, but there is some ambiguity about political sovereignty north of the Araxes at this time: 'Tribute was paid to the Saljuqs by various local rulers, but this was not a regular source of

income…in due course most of the local rulers…were absorbed into the iqta' system. Occasionally…tribute was imposed on a neighbouring ruler. Malik-Shah, for example…imposed an annual tribute of 40,000 dinars on the ruler of Shirvan, but this was not regularly paid': Lambton, 'Internal structure', p. 253.

[2] Lordkipanidze, *Georgia*, p. 101. A much more detailed account of these events is given in Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 119–27, 130–4.

[3] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 188–9. Note the inappropriate use of the word 'Transcaucasian' in this and many other books for Russian readers: to a Georgian 'trans'-Caucasian could only mean 'beyond the mountains to the north'.

[4] Suny, Making, pp. 36–8.

[5] Bosworth, 'Political and dynastic history', pp. 112, 167–71, 178–9.

[6] The form 'Tamara' is not Georgian, but was invented by the Russians because their language expresses gender in its grammatical forms, usually by the suffix *-a*, whereas Georgian has no grammatical gender.

[7] Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy*, pp. 49–50.

[8] *Ibid*., pp. 66–74; *Zhizn tsaritsy tsarits Tamar*, pp. 30–2, 54–5.

[9] Toumanoff, ‘Armenia and Georgia’, pp. 623–4.

[10] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 31, 112–13.

[11] Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, p. 101.

[12] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 202–4; Bosworth, ‘Political and dynastic history’, p. 179; Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy*, pp. 76, 84–7; D. M. Nicol, ‘The Fourth Crusade and the Greek and Latin Empires, 1204–1261’, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part 1, p. 291; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol. III, pp. 101, 126; *Zhizn tsaritsy tsarits Tamar*, p. 45.

[13] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 169, 205–7.

[14] Beridze, *et al.*, *Treasures*, pp. 24–5, 30–2, 36, 38, 46, 55–6, 107, 166–7; Burney and Lang, *Peoples of the Hills*, pp. 208, 238–43, 249; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 28–30; Lordkipanidze, *Georgia*, pp. 89–92, 98, 103–4; Mepisashvili and Tsintsadze, *Arts*, pp. 31, 62–4, 74–5, 80–7, 115–17, 150–7, 162–3, 178, 213, 215; Suny, *Making*, pp. 34–40.

[15] The animal in whose skin the hero is clothed is also problematic: although the Georgian word in the title is unambiguously ‘tiger’ (*vepkhvi*), most translators use ‘panther’ (identical with ‘leopard’ in modern English) – a smaller animal whose Georgian name, *jiki*, is not used in this context, but whose skin, or that of the snow leopard, is worn by the epic hero Rustam in many medieval Persian paintings: see V. S. Curtis, *Persian Myths*, London, 1993, pp. 30–1, 36–40, 42, 45–6, 49–52; B. Gray, *Persian Painting*, Geneva, 1961,

p. 98; C. Welch, *Royal Persian Manuscripts*, London, 1976, pp. 36, 39, 41, 43, 49. Perhaps the poet, being a Georgian, wanted to make his hero excel those of Persia by associating him with the larger, more formidable animal.

[16] Sh. Rustaveli, *The Knight in Panther Skin*, free translation in prose by Katharine Vivian, London, 1977, p. 35; Sh. Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, translated from Georgian by V. Urushadze, Tbilisi, 1979, p. 16.

[17] As the first translator of the poem into English recognized in her title – M. S. Wardrop, *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, London, 1912; 'he of the tiger-skin' might be a literal equivalent. See B. G. Hewitt, *Georgian: a Learner's Grammar*, London, 1996, pp. 331–2. Wardrop's version, 'supplemented and revised by E. Orbeliyani and S. Jordanishvili' was published in Moscow, 1938, and reprinted in 1966 with many colour illustrations by M. Tavakarashvili 'from a 17th century Georgian manuscript'.

[18] Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy*, pp. 61, 71.

[19] By this time there was a large number of official ranks and grades in the Georgian state. The titles of these offices came from various languages as well as Georgian: Zakaria, as war minister and commander-in-chief, was *Amir-spasalari* (a combination of an Arabic word and a Persian one); Ioane became *Atabagi*, the senior *Vazir* or minister, or *Msakhurt-ukhutsesi*, Chief of the Privy Purse: Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 106–7, 109, 257–62, 416.

[20] *Zhizn tsaritsy tsarits Tamar*, pp. 41–2.

[21] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 44; Lordkipanidze, *Georgia*, p. 158; Mepisashvili and Tsintsadze, *Arts*, pp. 198–200; *Zhizn tsaritsy tsarits Tamar*, pp. 41–2.

[22] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 207–8, 221–2.

[23] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 121–2, 171, 329, 337–9; P. Avitabile, [*Relazione su Georgia*] *tsnobebi sakartveloze (XVII saukune)*, introduction, translations and commentary by B. Giorgadze, Tbilisi, 1977; C. de Castelli, *Relazione e album dei schizzi sulla Georgia del secolo XVII/tsnobebi da albomi sak'artvelos shesakheb*, edited by B. Giorgadze, Tbilisi, 1976; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 79–82, 105–8, 130–1, 180–1; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. IV, *Iberiysko-kavkazskiye yazyki*, pp. 25, 61.

[24] McEvedy, *Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, pp. 80–5; H. R. Roemer, ‘The successors of Tīmūr’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI, pp. 102–3; Roemer, ‘The Türkmen dynasties’, *Ibid*., vol. VI, pp. 162–8.

[25] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 131–3; Berdzenishvili, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 259–64; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya tsarstva gruzinskogo*, translated from Georgian, with preface, chronology, glossaries and name index by N. T. Nakashidze, Tbilisi, 1976, pp. 228, 294.

[26] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 133; Lang, *Last Years*, p. 11.

[27] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 133.

[28] H. R. Roemer, ‘The Safavid period’, in *Cambridge History of Persia*, vol. VI, pp. 245–6.

[29] Yakut al-Khamawi, *Mu^{c}dzham al-buldan*, translated from Arabic by Z. M. Buniyatov and P. K. Zhuze; and Hamdullah Qazvini, *Nuzhat al-kuūb*, translated into Russian by Z. M. Buniyatov and I. P. Petrushevskiy, Baku, 1983, pp. 15, 18, 27, 31, 43, 47, 49; Zayn ad-Din ibn Hamdullah Qazvini, *Dhayl-e tarikh-e gozīdah* translations from Persian into Azerbaijani and Russian, and facsimile of Farsi original, supplied with preface, notes and indices, by M. D. Kazimov and V. Z. Piriyev, Baku, 1990.

[30] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 86–7, 172, 301.

[31] Another theory is that it came from a ninth-century ruler of the Daghestani ‘kingdom of the Lakz, or Lesgians’, Muhammad b. Yazid of the Kesran tribe: *Ibid*., pp. 30, 45, 87, 122, 146–7, 172, 301.

[32] *Ibid*., pp. 114–22; V. V. Barthold and C. E. Bosworth, ‘Shīrwān’ and ‘Shīrwānshāh’, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. IX, pp. 187–9.

[33] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 118–19.

[34] *Ibid*., p. 119.

[35] *Ibid*., p. 125.

[36] *Ibid*., pp. 125–9, 134; Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy*, p. 34.

[37] Suny, *Making*, p. 36.

[38] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 147–9, 174–5.

[39] *Ibid*., pp. 138–40.

[40] Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy*, pp. 30–1.

[41] See Aliyev, ed., Istoriya Azerbaydzhana, maps on pp. 418–22.

[42] Buniyatov, *Gosudarstvo atabekov*, p. 159.

[43] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, p. 140.

[44] *Ibid*., p. 139.

[45] E.g. Suny, *Making*, pp. 4, 7, 8, 13, 15, 171–9, etc.

[46] Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 12–13, 202–3, 269, 333–54, 382–93, 407–16, 437–43, 496–9. For architecture, see Arutyunyan, *Kamennaya letopis, passim*; Beridze, *et al*., Treasures, pp. 21–58; D. R. Buxton, *Russian Mediaeval Architecture, with an Account of the Transcaucasian Styles and Their Influence in the West*, Cambridge, 1934, pp. 70–9, 85–98, plates 82–105; Mepisashvili and Tsintsadze, *Arts*, pp. 7–10, 22–5, 59–220.

[47] Suny, *Making*, pp. 5, 24, 28–9, 30, 32–3.

[48] *Malyy atlas mira*, Moscow, 1966, p. 4; *Atlas SSSR*, 1983, pp. 102, 112; S. V. Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz: geograficheskoye opisaniye v 22-kh tomakh. Gruziya*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 21, 201, 204–5, 221.

[49] Names like Barata*shvili* and Tabi*dze*, with the italicized elements meaning 'child', occur all over Georgia, but are especially characteristic of Kartli and Ḳakheti, and *-dze* also in Imereti. Names with suffixes denoting places of origin, such as Tṣeret*eli*, can occur in any region, but others like Anase*uli* and Lomo*uri* are associated with the mountain regions of Khevsureti, Pshaveti and Mtiuleti. More specific are Megrelian surnames ending in *-a*, as in Janash*ia*, Eli*ava*, Sig*ua* and Ingoroq*va*, while those ending like Chikov*ani* are associated with Svaneti, and those in *-ba* with Abkhazia, e.g. Lako*ba*. See R. Gachechiladze, *The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics*, London, 1995, pp. 7–11, 78–9; B. O. Unbegaun, *Russian Surnames*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 382–6.

[50] From 50 to more than 100 litres per second per square kilometre – which in the Soviet Union was equalled only by the southern tip of Kamchatka in the Far East: *Atlas SSSR*, 1983, p. 102.

[51] Abkhazian and Abaza, like the related Circassian languages, have a great preponderance of consonant sounds (in Circassian between forty-six and sixty-eight, Abaza and Abkhaz fifty-seven) and very few vowels – only [a] and the neutral vowel [ə] with contextual variants. Georgian has twenty-eight consonant phonemes and five vowels: Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 202–3, 205–7; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. IV,

Iberiysko-kavkazskiye yazyki, pp. 95–7, 103–5, 125–9, 145–8, 166–8, 690–3.

[52] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 35.

[53] G. A. Melikishvili, *Politicheskoye ob"edineniye feodalnoy Gruzii i nekotorye voprosy feodalnykh otnosheniy v Gruzii*, Tbilisi, 1973, pp. 50–1, 191, 202, cited in *Letopis Kartli*, pp. 9–10.

[54] *Letopis Kartli*, p. 10 n. 11.

[55] *Ibid*., pp. 31–3, 48; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 256, 401 nn. 44, 45. Much hinges upon the argument whether the Georgian past tense *daipqra* 'took possession of ' can mean 'conquered' or only 'became peacefully united with'.

[56] *Letopis Kartli*, pp. 31–4. Note that this early independent 'Abkhazian Kingdom' or principality is quite distinct from the later Georgian 'Kingdom of Abkhazia'.

[57] O. Bgazhba, 'History: first to eighteenth centuries'; V. Chirikba, 'The origin of the Abkhazian people'; S. Lakoba, 'History: 18th century–1917'; G. Shamba, 'On the track of Abkhazia's antiquity': all chapters in Hewitt, ed., The Abkhazians.

[58] Strabo, *Geography*, vol. V, pp. 207–11, 241, map XI. For maps and illustrations of the impressive antiquities found at these sites, see *Arkheologiya SSSR*, pp. 9, 59, 73–88, 126–8, 136–4, 177, 252–4, 280–3, 292–302, 331–7, etc.

[59] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 47.

[60] Ya. A. Fyodorov, *Istoricheskaya etnografiya Severnogo Kavkaza*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 45–6, 66, 83, 92–4, 97–100; Hewitt, *Abkhazians*, pp. 13, 15, 17–18, 40–2, 50–3, 198; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 113, 151, 198–9, 298, 368.

[61] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 81–4.

[62] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, p. 20, citing J. D. Mackie, *A History of Scotland*, Harmondsworth, 1969, pp. 29, 37.

[63] N. Davies, *The Isles: a History*, London, 1999, pp. 432–4, 441–6.

[64] Vakhushti was the son of Vakhtang VI of Kartli, with whom he fled to Russia in 1724 after the shah deposed the king for collaborating in Peter the Great's Persian expedition. Vakhushti, composing his history in exile in Moscow, explained to readers his difficulties in working from the various, often conflicting, versions of Georgian chronicles which he took with him (some of which were subsequently lost): Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 7–8, 19–20, 192–3. See also L. Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, Newhaven and London, 1998, p. 58; Toumanoff, ‘Chronology’, pp. 7–8.

[65] Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 221–2.

[66] *Ibid*., p. 224. See also Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 78–81, 237–8; Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 497–8;

Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', pp. 617–18, 621.

[67] Anchabadze, Iz istorii, pp. 172–5.

[68] *Ibid*., pp. 104–5; Suny, *Making*, pp. 32–3.

[69] Anchabadze, *Iz istorii*, pp. 76–8.

[70] This is not in itself so difficult to accept, since Church Slavonic was for centuries the liturgical language in the Orthodox Church in Romania, as was Latin in the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world.

[71] Anchabadze, *Iz istorii*, pp. 118–36, 144–7, 151–2; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, pp. 100–1; Sh. D. Inal-Ipa, 'Abkhazy', in *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 376.

[72] Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 237, 242, 244–5, 253–4, 255.

[73] K. Kudryavtsev, *Sbornik materialov po istorii Abkhazii*, Sukhum, 1926, p. 124, cited in Anchabadze, *Iz istorii*, pp. 157–8, with the ostensible intention of showing the absurdity of Kudryavtsev's 'idealistic' (i.e. non-Marxist) views. However, Anchabadze then informs us that this 'historically incorrect…extreme exaggeration' of the Abkhazes' role in the Abkhazian Kingdom, combined with 'disregard for the all-Georgian nature of…[its] policies', can be found in the works of several other Abkhazian historians. Anchabadze states that such opinions are no less mistaken than 'attempts to disregard completely the role of the Abkhazes in the… Kingdom, not to mention the denial of the ethnic individuality of the medieval Abkhazes and of any genetic

connection between them and contemporary Abkhazians' – precisely the assertions frequently attributed to the twentieth-century Georgian nationalist writer E. Ingoroqva.

[74] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 109; D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 34, 114, 120; Bgazhba, 'History: first to eighteenth centuries', p. 63; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 130, 191, 225, 292–3, etc. One example (of many) of a Georgian editor leaving unexplained the origin of the name 'Giorgi Lasha' is *Zhizn tsaritsy tsarits Tamar*, pp. 17, 33, 55; see also B. G. Hewitt, 'Abkhazia: a problem of identity and ownership' [version 2] in Goldenberg, Schofield and Wright, eds., Transcaucasian Boundaries, pp. 190–226.

[75] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 184, 247–8; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 207–9, 216–17, 239–42; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 77–8. For a discussion of these dynasties and their titles, see W. E. D. Allen, *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings (1589–1605)*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1970, vol. I, pp. 37–45.

[76] H. S. Fyodorov-Huseynov, *Istoriya proiskhozhdeniya kumykov*, Makhachkala, 1996, pp. 138–9.

[77] Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, p. 39.

[78] *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 207–9, 216–17.

[79] Z. A. Nikolskaya, 'Avartsy', in *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 440; Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 91–3.

[80] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 160, 177, 188–90, 203, 216, 218–19, 401–2, 407–8; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 385; Z. A. Nikolskaya, 'Istoricheskiye predposylki natsionalnoy konsolidatsii avartsev', *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1953, no. 1, p. 116.

[81] Compare, for instance, *Narody Kavkaza* (1960), vol. I, pp. 71, 90–3, with the somewhat more subtle *Istoriya Dagestana* (1967), vol. I, pp. 187–95, 239–51, 316–17, 319–20.

[82] *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 389–90.

[83] *Ibid*., [vol. I], p. 240.

[84] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 190–1.

[85] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 193–4.

[86] A. Bennigsen and S. E. Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: a Guide*, Bloomington, 1986, pp. 167–8; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. X, p. 31; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 233–4.

[87] See A. Jaimoukha, *The Circassians: a Handbook*, London, 2001, pp. 19, 22.

[88] B. A. Kaloyev, *Zemledeliye narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, Moscow, 1981, pp. 20–41; V. P. Kobychev, *Poseleniye i zhilishche narodov Severnogo Kavkaza v XIX–XX vv.*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 85, 96, 113–15, 160–3; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 142–5, 147, 160–1, 203–6; vol. II, pp. 380, 392;

Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii, edited by V. P. Nevskaya, *et al.*, 2 vols., Stavropol, 1967–72, vol. I, pp. 172–5; A. Tsalikov [Tsalykatty], 'Borba za volyu gor Kavkaza' [Prague, 1927], with preface by Z. Salagayeva, *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 165–6, p. 38.

[89] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 71–2; R. Traho, *Cherkesy (Cherkesy Severnogo Kavkaza)*, Nalchik, 1992, pp. 15–21.

[90] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, edited by S. K. Bushuyev, M. S. Totoyev, *et al.*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1959–66, vol. I, pp. 74–6, 80–2; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 123–4, 148–9, 194–5, 204–7, 215–17; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, pp. 91–2.

[91] J. F. Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*, 2 vols., London, 1940, maps I, III, VI.

[92] S. A. Tokarev, *Etnografiya narodov SSSR*, Moscow, 1958, p. 261.

[93] Fyodorov, *Istoricheskaya etnografiya*, pp. 107–9; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 197, 207, 210, 212, 264, 277, 370–1, 405; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, pp. 101–4; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 104–5; B. V. Tekhov, ed., *Ocherki istorii Yugo-Osetinskoy avtonomnoy oblasti*, 2 vols., Tbilisi, 1985, vol. I, *Istoriya yuzhnykh osetin do obrazovaniya YuOAO*, pp. 65–6, 84–96.

[94] Comrie, *Languages*, p. 50; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 243, 270; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, pp. 268–70.

[95] I. M. Miziyev, *Narody Kabardy i Balkarii v XIII–XVIII vv.*, Nalchik, 1995, p. 5.

[96] *Ibid*., pp. 8, 10–12, 20–3.

[97] S. S. Anisimov, Kabardino-Balkaria, Moscow, 1937, pp. 77–8. Although this book (mostly about the Balkars) which was published at the height of the KPSS Terror, evades the question of the origin of the Osetians, it at least mentions them under the name 'Alans', whereas Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy (1959) makes no reference whatever to the Balkars in early times. For a map of the Balkar–Osetian border, see Baddeley, *Rugged Flanks*, map. VI.

[98] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 282–7; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. II, pp. 23–4; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 156, 188, 209, 241, 276; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 169, 202–4; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 79, 89–90, 93–4; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, p. 252; *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1953, pp. 1–3; Vakhushti, *Istoriya*, pp. 90, 94, 106, 163, 242, 252, 282.

6 Caucasia between Persia and Ottoman Turkey

The Turks and intra-Islamic conflicts

In the fifteenth century the emirate of the Ottoman (Uthman) Turks, having subjugated its neighbours and the remnants of the Byzantine Empire, emerged supreme in Asia Minor, and it would dominate the Near East, North Africa and south-eastern Europe for 400 years. When in 1458 Pope Pius II called for a crusade against the Ottoman Empire by all Christian monarchs, King Giorgi VIII of Georgia was one of the few to respond, as his country was particularly affected by the disruption of contacts with Europe and the Mediterranean lands. The Vatican's idea of an anti-Turkish crusade having failed in Europe, Giorgi himself attempted to organize a crusading coalition by sending delegations (including representatives of the Empire of Trebizond and Cilician Armenia) to the pope in 1460, and to Queen Isabella of Spain in the 1490s. These appeals failed because ‘for the European states it was far more important to avoid war with Turkey than to complicate relations by helping the king of Georgia’.[1] By 1500 the frontiers of Ottoman conquest in the east included Armenia and western Georgia, and in the north the plains around the Azov Sea, where the Crimean Tatar Khanate had become a vassal of the sultan in 1475.

Meanwhile in Central Asia, as a result of the Uzbeks’ dismantling of Timur's empire in the fifteenth century, three separate successor states had emerged. One of them embraced Transoxania with Samarkand as its capital, and the second Khorasan and Cisoxania, stretching east to Afghanistan, with its capital at Herat. The third – Persia, including Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia – was for a time engulfed by the Turkmen emirate of the White Sheep Turks, who moved their seat from Anatolia to Tabriz. In 1501, however, they were defeated by the Safavid shah Isma^{c}il, who made Tabriz the capital of his new Persian Empire, which included Azerbaijan and Shirvan, as well as Khorasan and the eastern provinces.[2]

Caucasia now became a battlefield for two rival Islamic states and two factions of Islam: Turkey, the ever growing, powerful Sunnite empire, ruled by sultans who would claim to have inherited the caliphate (the spiritual leadership of Islam) when Sultan Selim I conquered Cairo in 1517;[3] and Persia, reviving under its new dynasty of Safavids, founded in Azerbaijan when Isma^{c}il of Ardabil – whose family were leaders of the Safaviya mystical order, an offshoot of Shi^{c}ah Islam – was proclaimed shah in 1502 at Tabriz. The Shi^{c}ites, with their veneration of the seventh-century caliph ^{c}Ali as the first *imam* and only legitimate successor to Muhammad, were a minority whose doctrines embraced Sufi mysticism and an apocalyptic belief in a finite number of imams, the last of whom, the Mahdi, was expected to return to establish justice on earth.[4] Safavid ideology combined the concepts of the *ghazi* (a devotee of war for Islam), the *ṣufi* (a mystic having ‘direct knowledge of God’ through contemplation) and the warrior brotherhood (the Kyzylbash movement among the Turkmen tribes that provided Isma^{c}il's storm-troopers to impose Shi^{c}ism throughout Islam). Thus ‘[m]embers of a ṣūfī order…were converted to the ideals of a Holy War which are inherent in Islam, trained as fanatical warriors and…led [armies] into battle’.[5] However,

> There were still millions of Sunni Muslims in Iran…[and] [t]here were still…hundreds of thousands of Shīᶜites in the Ottoman lands who might be suspected of sympathizing with the new…regime to the east…[T]he Ottoman sultan and the Safavid shah were for one another heretics and usurpers beyond the pale of toleration. The Safavid threat to the Ottomans was rendered at once more acute and more intimate by the Turkish origin of the Safavid family and their extensive support in Turkish Anatolia…A long and bitter struggle between the two empires followed, in which the bloody repression of the Shīᶜites in Turkey and of the Sunnis in Iran watered their mutual their mutual hate and fear with the blood of martyrs.[6]

However, another historian maintains that ‘the rôle of religion and the dervish orders in these disturbances’ has been greatly exaggerated and that, in the long conflict between Persia's Safavid régime and the Ottomans,

> Safavid Shiᶜism was political in nature, representing the last and most successful bid for power of those Caspian regions which had always resisted the central authority of Islam; in adopting Shah Ismāᶜīl and providing him with an ᶜAlid genealogy, they sought to win to their cause those regions of Āzarbāyjān where the prestige of the family among the Turkish tribal elements would assure them additional military support in their bid for power…[T]he Kizilbash Turks, far from being devoted fanatics, behave always with complete religious indifference: their tribal identity is never allowed to disappear into that of the state, and

> the interests of the tribe are the[ir] only paramount ideal.[7]

The new dynasty's rise to power, however, automatically created a dilemma:

> [As] the Safavids had now inherited the traditional Iranian military responsibility of maintaining the Oxus frontier against the unrelenting pressure of…Central Asia…[p]olicy demanded that they should foster peace with the Ottomans, as indeed they consistently sought to do; always it is the Ottomans who are the aggressors, and only a sense of insecurity in [their new location on the fringe of] Europe and a fear of separation from the Islamic matrix…impelled them to persist in…[their] profitless and inconclusive campaigns in the untenable regions of Āzarbāyjān and along the Euphrates.
>
> In the Ottoman Empire war was a state enterprise…the proceeds of which redressed…[its] disastrous trading balance and assured what economic stability there was; and only war in Europe could promise such returns. It was this Ottoman preoccupation with its European frontier that led the Asiatic provinces [of Anatolia] to regard Turkey as a foreign power, and to look towards the east for protection from the systematic exploitation to which they were subjected in the interests of Istanbul.[8]

In Walsh's view, in the sixteenth century ‘[w]estern Europe, and notably Spain, France and England witnessed the evolution of the national state conceived in terms of confessional unity, and this [was] strikingly paralleled by developments in the Islamic East’. The Iranians’ foundation of their national unity on Shi^{c}ism excluded even the Kyzylbash, who despite trying to conform to it remained unassimilated:

> The familiar paradox of this Persian state being ruled by a dynasty of Turkish origin has concealed the extent to which the latter was made the instrument of a policy formed and directed by others…which it later came to regard as its own…The Ottomans…had no such national basis, precedent or memory of unity and were compelled to operate within a concept of empire defined only by Islam…[I]n his letters to foreign princes, the Sultan describes the extent of his dominions as embracing practically the whole Muslim world…the formal integrity of which was to balance the growing dynamism of Christian Europe.[9]

It was because Shi^{c}ite Safavid Persia stood out so prominently from this Islamic world of Sunnism that Turkey engaged in ‘the series of fruitless wars which…[historians] usually suppl[y] with some trifling reason out of all proportion to their expense in men, money, and materials, but which may be seen as the result of the innate insecurity of the Ottoman Empire’.[10]

Confirmation of this contrast between Persian and Ottoman attitudes is found in ‘the terms and tone’ of histories of these wars written in the two countries:

> Persian historians generally show a becoming respect for their western neighbour whom they regard as a bastion of Islam against infidel Europe, and…are never churlish in defeat or gloating in victory. In fact, the Ottomans, unlike the Uzbeks…were never considered a serious menace, and after the misadventure of Shah Ismā^{c}īl at Chaldirān it became policy not to confront them in battle, but to wait to the end of the campaigning season when [the Ottomans] would be obliged to return to their own territories and leave their conquests to be painlessly reclaimed.[11]

The Ottomans, 'on the other hand, are unrestrained, often to the point of scurrility, in the[ir] opprobrium of the Shah and his adherents' – for instance, presenting Shah Tahmasp as 'a cowardly hermaphrodite'. Another aspect of contemporary accounts of the Ottoman--Persian wars which emerges is that the religious prejudice from which they arose flourished on mutual ignorance:

> the very passion of the invective [on both sides] shows the struggle to have been regarded as a war of religion. Accusations of licentiousness, atrocities against the Sunnis and desecrations of Qur'āns, mosques and other pious objects abound, usually based on hearsay and without any attempt at substantiation, and…are frequently offered as adequate motives for launching an attack against Safavid territory. The impression is inescapable that neither side had very much information about the other, and…each…rel[ied] on the accounts of

> travellers…The Ottomans know practically nothing of Persian activities except on their own frontiers. In none of the Persian histories is there any mention of written Ottoman sources…Iskandar Beg…frequently attributes his remarks on the Ottomans to rumour or current report…In their inability to perceive the pattern of events…each event and its agent is specific, and as the presence of Safavid sheykhs is to be the adequate explanation for any tribal disturbance, their doctrine had to be shown as hideous in order to justify the mercilessness of their repression.[12]

The contrast in tone between the two sides in letters written by Sultan Selim and Shah Ismaᶜil in 1511, just before war broke out between them, evokes ironic comment from another historian: 'the sultan wrote to the shah in Persian, the language of urbane, cultivated gentlemen, while the shah wrote to the sultan in Turkish, the language of his rural and tribal origins'.[13]

Black Sheep and White Sheep Turks and Shirvan-shahs

The founder of the Safavid order was the Turkmen sheykh Junaid, who claimed leadership of the Black Sheep Turks but was expelled and roamed through Anatolia and Syria with his followers until taken up by the White Sheep Turk[14] leader, Uzun Ḥasan. Junaid, who wanted to conquer Shirvan for the Shiᶜite cause, died in battle against the Lezgis in their homeland on the river Samur in 1460. It was the headdress adopted by his son Sheykh Haidar for his warriors – a turban wound round a cap with twelve red gores (symbolizing the twelve imams) – that gave them the name ‘Redhead’ (in Turkish *Kyzylbash*). They became notorious for their ferocity in battle and, according to a typical Sunnite diatribe by a recent Lezgi historian, for ‘the Shiᶜite order's reckless striving for power, subjugation of other peoples, robbery and lawlessness’.[15] The Kyzylbash warriors’ beliefs had much in common with ‘folk Islam’, such as the deification of ᶜAli or their own leaders (including the Anatolian shah Quli, who was worshipped as ‘God, Prophet and Mahdi’). They were required to give absolute obedience to their spiritual master (Arabic *murshīd*, Persian *pīr*),[16] and ‘longed for death as a direct access to paradise’, but also believed that physical invulnerability to weapons could be attained by reciting incantations.[17]

In 1468 Uzun Ḥasan of the White Sheep Turks dealt the final blow to the Black Sheep Turk state and established his own horde in Azerbaijan and Karabagh, with Tabriz as their centre. His neighbour north of the Kura, the Shirvan-shah Farrukh Yasar, realizing the threat this represented, tried to obtain protection by making diplomatic approaches to the Ottoman sultan and the Russian tsar. Simultaneously, Shirvan was threatened by the Timurid sultan ᶜAbu Saᶜid, who brought his host from Herat to Mughan on Shirvan's south-eastern border. At first he received food supplies from Shirvan, but Farrukh Yasar, under pressure from Uzun Ḥasan, switched to an alliance with the White Sheep Turks, and the Safavid sheykh Ḥaidar of Ardabil. Uzun Ḥasan and his allies then blockaded ᶜAbu Saᶜid's army in the Mughan steppe, eventually surrounding them and killing ᶜAbu Saᶜid.[18]

After Uzun Ḥasan's death in 1478 relations between the Shirvan-shah and his allies altered. Uzun Ḥasan's heir Yakub supported Farrukh Yasar and was married to the Shirvan princess Goukhar Sultan, whose mother was the sister of Adil-bek, the *utsmi* of Kaitagh in Daghestan. Yakub's two sons by Goukhar Sultan, Baisungur and Murad, sought sanctuary with their uncle, Farrukh Yasar, when Sheykh Ḥaidar attacked Shirvan in 1483. Thanks to the support of his uncle Uzun Ḥasan, Ḥaidar enjoyed great influence over the murids in Ardabil, and he now planned to avenge the killing of his father, Junaid, by Farrukh Yasar's father Khalilullah. Obtaining Farrukh's permission to pass through Shirvan and its vassal Darband in order to extirpate the ‘infidels’ (i.e. Sunni Muslims) in Daghestan, to whom the Shirvanis applied the misnomer ‘Circassians’ as a blanket term, just as the Georgians called all Daghestanis *le*ḳ*ebi*, ‘Lezgis’. Having repeated this ‘*jihad*’ in 1487, Ḥaidar, with Sultan Yakub's blessing, was once again granted free passage through Shirvan with an army augmented by numerous Kyzylbash warriors, Talesh tribesmen and Turkmens from Syria. On his journey north from Ardabil Ḥaidar diverged into Karabagh to plunder Jalpert and capture for the slave market local non-Muslim residents ‘who were living peacefully and paying their taxes’. Shirvan had also ‘long been at peace and its warriors idle’, and Farrukh Yasar welcomed him by sending gifts, including horses and weapons for his ‘holy war’ in Daghestan. Realizing that the Shirvan-shah was caught off his guard, Sheykh Ḥaidar saw an opportunity too good to miss, and sent back Farrukh's envoy with the message: ‘Tell your emir we are at war with him: for the sake of a single drop of my father's blood we will behead everyone in the world.’[19]

As Farrukh Yasar lacked the troops to challenge such a fanatical enemy, he locked himself up with his family and other citizens in the fortress of Gülistan, while Ḥaidar indulged his thirst for vengeance by making his warriors slaughter without mercy the unarmed populace of

Shamakha, including women and children, and setting the city on fire. The Shirvan-shah, after months under siege in his Gülistan citadel, sent an appeal for help to Sultan Yakub in Azerbaijan, and in July a large force of warriors from various emirates made Sheykh Ḥaidar the target of their *jihad*. They exterminated the Kyzylbash army in Tabasaran, and exhibited Ḥaidar's severed head before sending it to his mother. Thereafter many of Ḥaidar's Kyzylbash settled on the Kura plain, and ten years later Ismaᶜil took up the vendetta by killing Farrukh Yasar in a surprise attack on his capital, Shamakha. In acknowledgment of his debt to Sultan Yakub for delivering him from Sheykh Ḥaidar's clutches, Farrukh Yasar had submitted to the White Sheep Turks as their vassal in 1489, but when Yakub died a year later this fealty was rescinded and Shirvan became an independent state again.[20]

Meanwhile three of Ḥaidar's young sons, after several years of custody in the Armenian monastery of Aghtamar, escaped death at the hands of the White Sheep Turks, and it was one of them, Ismaᶜil, who, after various plots and the defeat of the Shirvan-shah, emerged as the leader of the Safavids. He had a tower of severed heads built by his Kyzylbashis to mark his triumph, and gave the order for all Shirvani prisoners to be executed. After occupying Baku, with the whole of Azerbaijan in his hands, Ismaᶜil entered Tabriz to declare himself the first Safavid shah of Persia. Because of continuing attempts to restore the independence of Shirvan, and its refusal to render tribute, Ismaᶜil returned to Shamakha and Baku, and went on to besiege and occupy Darband. In 1523 his final subjection of rebellious Shirvan was celebrated by his marriage to the last Shirvan-shah's daughter.

Shirvan was now the Persian shah's vassal, and by 1537, under Farrukh Yasar's 15-year-old son Shah-Rukh, its decline set in, with power in the hands of local emirs. A popular uprising led by a dervish briefly occupied Shamakha, but this soon collapsed, and local chieftains, having defeated and killed Shah-Rukh, embarked on a reign of terror. This not only punished ‘contempt for religious institutions’ (presumably meaning anti-Shiᶜite activity) but avenged a declaration of allegiance which Shah-Rukh of Shirvan had sent to Suleiman the Magnificent after an Ottoman invasion of Iraq and Azerbaijan in 1534–5. Ismaᶜil's successor, Shah Tahmasp, ambitious to annex Shirvan to the Persian Empire, led an invasion force of 20,000 Kyzylbash, the tribal militias of the Ustajlu, Qajar and Talesh emirs, and levies from Karabagh and Mughan, which in 1538 systematically subjugated Shirvan, with many false promises and executions – some of them performed by the shah himself as yet more vengeance for the blood of Sheykh Ḥaidar.[21] The mindless pursuit of revenge by medieval rulers was of course widespread in Europe too, but in the Middle East and Caucasus it manifested a special degree of blood-lust, cruelty and war for the sake of war because of the intense bigotry and self-righteousness prevailing among the religious factions of Sunna and Shiᶜah, which encouraged their leaders, large or small, to represent family blood-vengeance and plundering as ‘holy war’. Most of the aristocracy of the former kingdom of Shirvan was annihilated, and it once again became a province of Persia – although spontaneous rebellions continued until 1578. In 1544, for instance, Shah-Rukh's cousin Burhan ad-Din, who now lived with Kaitagh relatives in Daghestan, led an unsuccessful uprising, after which he went to Turkey to solicit the sultan's support. Although he received substantial Turkish forces, he encountered such powerful Kyzylbash resistance that he sent his troops back to Turkey. In 1548, when Sultan Suleyman himself led a huge invasion of south Caucasia, Burhan brought sympathizers from Kaitagh to join the Turkish army, and was allowed to lead the assault on Shirvan. He captured Shamakha, and with the support of Ottoman troops and Shirvani partisans from the mountains, Burhan drove Tahmasp's troops out of Shirvan, where he established himself as governor. However, the Turks then pulled out of southern Azerbaijan, allowing Shah Tahmasp to take the offensive, and the Turkmen chief ^{c}Abdallah Khan Ustajlu and his Kyzylbashis quickly disposed of Burhan's army. When Suleyman launched another invasion of Persia in 1554 a member of one of Shirvan's ruling families, Kasim-Mirza, a protégé of the sultan, incited an anti-Safavid uprising. Provided with Turkish janissaries and artillery, Kasim advanced through the Crimean khanate and Daghestan to invade Shirvan. Despite repulsing a Kyzylbash attack in the mountains near Kuba and fighting hard against ^{c}Abdallah Khan's army near Shamakha, he was defeated and forced to flee to Tabasaran. The heads of Kasim-Mirza's men killed in battle were stacked in piles by the Kyzylbash, whose subsequent régime in Shirvan under *beglerbeg* ^{c}Abdallah Khan inspired terror even in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, Shirvan separatism lingered on among the remnants of its dynasty exiled in Daghestan. An abortive revolt in 1577 was an Ottoman-inspired contribution to Sultan Murad III's invasion of Persia, but he did not keep his promise to revive the Shirvan state, and when Tahmasp retook it in 1583 Shirvan completely lost its autonomy. In 1590 the Ottomans imposed a harsh treaty whereby Shah ^{c}Abbas ceded to them almost the whole territory north of the lower Araxes, including Shamakha, Baku, Shaki and Shirvan, which remained in Turkish hands until 1608.[22]

As the Turkmens renewed their raids on Persia's Azerbaijan frontier to the south, and especially after Sultan Selim defeated Shah Isma^{c}il at the battle of Chaldiran (1514), Tabriz found itself frequently invaded by the Ottomans. The Safavids realized that the exposed position on Persia's Azerbaijanian frontier of a capital city having such importance as a trading centre was too vulnerable, and that the Iranian capital must be moved farther from Turkey. In 1548, therefore, Shah Tahmasp transferred his capital south-east to Qazvin. This also demonstrated the dwindling influence of the Turkmens within the Persian Empire and a new tendency towards Iranization, which culminated in 1598 with ^{c}Abbas I's removal of the capital still farther south-east to Isfahan, heralding

> the establishment of a strong, enduring state in Iran after centuries of foreign rule and a lengthy period of political fragmentation…The importance of…[the Safavid] dynasty is not confined to the national history of Persia: it was the Safavids who led Iran back on to the stage of world history. Their conflicts with the Ottomans and their policy of alliance with the Western powers have a world-historical interest and a direct relevance to the history of Western Europe.[23]

As the centre of Persian power became farther removed from the northern border, while Daghestan and Shirvan were subject to Ottoman incursions from the north-west, Turkish-speaking rulers north of the Araxes continued to act independently of their cousins to the south, showing little sign of the convergence which later Azerbaijani nationalists attribute to them.[24]

Azerbaijan

The sixteenth century in the Caucasus witnessed not only great battles between the empires of Persia and Turkey: conflicts between smaller ethnic communities, and between believers in various religions were, as always, rife. It has been asserted that under the first Safavids Azerbaijan began to emerge as a recognizable ethnic entity in which the khanates of Tabriz and Ardabil in north-western Persia, and those of Shirvan and Shaki farther north beyond the Araxes, achieved a degree of unity.[25] This view – a cornerstone of Azerbaijani Turkish nationalism – rests partly on the fact that Azerbaijani Turkish was the language of the Persian court at this time, as well as the medium for many notable poets from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, such as Falaki (1107–57?), Khaqani of Shirvan (1120–99), Niẓami of Ganja (c. 1143–1209?) and Muḥammad Fizuli (1494–1556), who is celebrated in today's Azerbaijan as its national poet.[26] Great claims were made in twentieth-century Azerbaijan for these poets expressly as Turcophone writers, representing a kind of official linguistic nationalism. This inspired Azerbaijani historians to assert that their language, arising from the Oghuz and Kypchak dialects of tribes in Central Asia, had reached maturity as a medium for literary works by the thirteenth century, making it ‘one of the early written languages with a literary tradition going back many centuries’.[27] To enhance this exclusiveness, in accounts of medieval Azerbaijanian culture published in the USSR the incontrovertible fact that Azerbaijan was – despite the long eclipse of native Persian dynastic rule by alien régimes – still only a part of Iran was suppressed in the interests of celebrating the Turkish dialect introduced by the nomadic invaders into the north-western provinces of Persia, Shirvan, Aran and Azerbaijan. In the immediate post-Stalin period it was still possible for historians writing about

Azerbaijan to present a balanced view of this situation: 'At the [shah's] court and in the army the dominant language for a long time was Azerbaijani, which was understood by all the Turkic tribes in Iran, and Shah Isma'il himself wrote poetry in it under the pseudonym "Khatay". It was only in official correspondence that, in accordance with the old feudal tradition, Persian was used.'[28]

By the seventeenth century 'the Azerbaijani language was widespread throughout the Safavid empire, especially among the ruling class…It is noteworthy that at that time… Azerbaijani, one of the Turkic languages, was distinct from [Ottoman] Turkish, and Azerbaijanian literature took its own path of development, preserving the specific features particular to it.'[29] So far as the spoken languages are concerned, however, the fact is that even 300 years later, in the twentieth century, Azerbaijanis and Turks found they could converse with each other easily, using their own languages.[30] The same no doubt applied to these languages in the sixteenth century, but there can scarcely be any manuscript material on which to base comparisons between the spoken Turkish and Azerbaijani of the time, because of the nature of Arabic script.[31] The closeness of Azerbaijani to Ottoman Turkish was hidden in the USSR by the alphabet created as part of the linguistic 'reforms' of the 1930s – one of whose functions was to conceal linguistic affinities between 'Soviet' peoples and their foreign counterparts.[32]

As Shi^{c}ism was Persia's national religion under the Safavids, it also became the dominant form of Islam in Azerbaijan, whereas Muslims in Daghestan, North Caucasus and Central Asia adhered to Sunni 'correct doctrine', as did the Ottoman Empire. Thus the Caucasus became one of the principal arenas of conflict between the Sunnis and the Shi^{c}ah.[33] Because of Isma^{c}il's ambition and the undisciplined violence of the Kyzylbash on the one hand, and the aggressive expansionism of the Ottoman Empire on the other, war broke out in 1514 between Shah Isma^{c}il (1501–24) and Sultan Selim (1512–20), each considering himself to be the supreme leader of Islam. The peoples of the Caucasus inevitably suffered during these Persian--Turkish conflicts which raged through their lands for 200 years. After wars in 1514–24 and 1530–54, Shah Tahmasp and Sultan Suleyman agreed in 1555 to divide the Caucasus between them, the Turks' half holding western Georgia and southern Armenia, while Persia claimed eastern Georgia, northern Armenia, Azerbaijan and Daghestan. Another Ottoman campaign in 1578, when the Turks abducted 60,000 Armenians as slaves, forced Persia to relinquish to the sultan all the Caucasian possessions it had claimed, including Daghestan. In 1603, however, Shah ^{c}Abbas I, taking advantage of disorders in Turkey, reconquered Armenia and Azerbaijan, in particular destroying many Armenian villages and towns and in his turn forcing 3,000 Armenian families – mainly craftsmen from Julfa in Nakhchavan – to move to Persia and settle at Isfahan. When, 36 years later, the invading Turks were driven out of Armenia but succeeded in keeping Mesopotamia, including Baghdad, Persia and Turkey agreed to return to their east--west division of the Caucasus, which lasted until the First World War.[34]

In one recent Azerbaijani history of their country, there is no indication that the inhabitants of Azerbaijan proper (stretching approximately from Qazvin in the south-east to Tabriz and the river Araxes in the north) and what later became northern Azerbaijan (from the Araxes to Shirvan, Baku, Shamakhi, Ganja and possibly even Darband) conceived themselves as citizens of one and the same state, the Azerbaijan that exists today. Yet in the 1980s--90s some Azerbaijani historians asserted that by the fifteenth century there existed ‘the Azerbaijani states of the Shirvan-shahs, the Black Sheep Turks and the White Sheep Turks’, and that ‘the plan for unification of the North and South of Azerbaijan was close to realization’ under its leader, the ‘outstanding politician, statesman and general’ Uzun Ḥasan. The villain who spoiled this plan was the sultan of Turkey, Mehemmed II (1451--81), the conqueror of Constantinople, who launched an unprovoked attack on Azerbaijan in 1473. The force working for the establishment of a strong, united Azerbaijani state was ‘the Azerbaijani dynasty of Sefevids’ (Turkish spelling). In this account not only is Persia scarcely mentioned, but it is said that the young Isma^{c}il ‘was crowned as the Shah of Azerbaijan’ – not of Iran! – and even that Shah Isma^{c}il thereafter *conquered* Isfahan, Yezd, Kashan, Shiraz, Kum and other Persian provinces. So, ‘The Sefevid state was formed during the sixteenth century and developed as an Azerbaijani state.’ Persia is still not mentioned as the major country concerned, although it is said that the surrender of almost all of Azerbaijan (i.e. western Iran) to Turkey in 1590 was forced upon Shah Abbas I (of what country?). This inept equivocation continues, but eventually the facts come out:

> For the continuance of the war against the Ottomans…Shah Abbas…introduced several reforms…The authority of the centre was reinforced and the role of the civil bureaucracy, consisting mainly of Iranian landowners, was strengthened. In 1598 the capital of the Sefevid state was moved from Kazvin to the city of Isfahan in central Iran…[and by] 1607 Shah Abbas succeeded in winning back the whole of Azerbaijan as well as part of Armenia and Georgia.[35]

Georgia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

The history of the Caucasian countries until the eighteenth century continued to be one of invasions, sieges, massacres, intrigues, alliances and betrayals, in the course of which Georgia (see Map 19), caught in the middle, was raided and pillaged by the Ottomans twice, and by the Persians more than a dozen times, and parts of Armenia were overrun routinely. In these circumstances the Christian Caucasian peoples were sometimes subjugated but seldom submissive, and occasional insurrections by Georgians or Armenians resulted in the brief independence of one region or another.[36] Particularly baleful for Georgia was the reign of Shah ^{c}Abbas I (1588–1629), who interfered greatly in Georgian affairs. While some Georgian princes and nobles were forced by circumstances to apostatize and become Muslims, many dedicated themselves to fighting for Christianity and the values which it embodied. Such was Luarsab I (1534–58) of Kartli, who was canonized because ‘all his life he waged war against the Muslims so that Georgia might not abandon Christ…[and] by his valour he brought many victories and strength to our lands’. King Svimon I (1557–69 and 1578–99), who succeeded Luarsab and married Levan of Ḳakheti's daughter Nestan-Darejan, strove to reunite Georgia. In 1569 he was captured by the Persians and, refusing to apostatize, was incarcerated in Alamut and Shiraz until 1578.

Other princes, however, became renegades, as did King Svimon's brother Davit, who after a disastrous defeat by the Kyzylbash in 1561, ‘went away to Persia…and became a traitor to his country by collaborating with the shah’. Tahmasp I (1524–76) welcomed him, made him a Muslim, calling him ‘my own son Dawud Khan’ and sent him with an army to take over Tbilisi. Twice his attacks were repulsed by King Svimon and, even when the shah sent Davit with reinforcements, Svimon once again put his enemies to flight, but in his fury pursued them too far and was captured. ‘Dawud Khan’ then established himself in Tbilisi as Davit IX (1569–78), only to be overcome by Lala-Pasha's Turks and imprisoned in Istanbul. Three years after Svimon's capture his grandson Luarsab II (1605–14) succeeded to the Kartli throne, but Shah ^{c}Abbas had him strangled in 1622. After the Kartlians paid a ransom, the purblind Shah Muhammad Khudabanda released him and many other Georgian prisoners, and Svimon was welcomed back to Kartli, where he quickly regained all its strongholds, including Tbilisi, and won a decisive victory over King Aleksandre II of Ḳakheti. However, Svimon was killed by Zurab, the governor of the Aragvi, a former protégé and associate of the Kartlian prefect Giorgi Saaḳadze, who won many victories over the Turks, but was captured in 1600, and died in prison in Istanbul.[37]

Svimon of Kartli was succeeded by his son Giorgi, and two years later Shah ^{c}Abbas asserted his suzerainty over him and Aleksandre II of Ḳakheti by ordering them to bring their armies to join his in laying siege to Yerevan. The city was stormed by the Georgians, but the shah brought in his Persians to occupy it. Thereafter, instead of rewarding King Giorgi by giving him another town to sack, ^{c}Abbas required Giorgi to give him the town of Lori, which he had captured in 1601.

In Ḳakheti too the last years of the reign of King Aleksandre II (1574–1605) were turbulent. In 1603 one of his sons, Giorgi, was conspiring to have his brother, Davit, murdered, but Davit foiled the plot, imprisoned both Giorgi and their father, and took over the kingdom himself.[38] However, Davit soon died, leaving his wife, Ketevan, and a son Teimuraz, so that Aleksandre was free to resume the throne, with Giorgi as Ḳakheti's crown prince. Fearing for the safety of her son if Giorgi became king, Ketevan sent Teimuraz to the supposed refuge of Shah ᶜAbbas's court. As the shah seemed to welcome the young prince sincerely, he eagerly started learning Persian, little suspecting that he was condemned to 58 years of unremitting trials and tribulation. ᶜAbbas, having Teimuraz in his hands, planned to utilize him to eliminate the two remaining heirs to the Ḳakhetian throne and then subjugate Kartli--Ḳakheti and impose Islam. King Aleksandre's fourth son Ḳonsṭanṭine, a Muslim convert, abetted the shah's machinations in 1605 by assassinating his father and his brother Giorgi.[39]

In the same year the 16-year-old Teimuraz was installed by ᶜAbbas as king of Ḳakheti. He married the daughter of a Gurian lord, who soon bore two sons, and ‘as Ḳakheti was a rich, populous land Teimuraz spent all his time enjoying himself, hunting and carousing’ – until 1610, when his wife died. Hearing of his grief, ᶜAbbas invited Teimuraz to come to the court, and the young king, who still trusted the shah, brought with him his sister and other Ḳakh nobles’ children. ᶜAbbas persuaded Teimuraz to cease mourning and join him in courtly pursuits, and one day he suggested that Teimuraz should marry King Luarsab II's sister, thus becoming one of ᶜAbbas's family. Although Teimuraz refused, because Christian law forbade cousin marriage, ᶜAbbas – well aware of this, but wishing to undermine the Georgians’ moral code – insisted. Teimuraz submitted and returned to Ḳakheti to marry the princess, with the blessing of King Luarsab, whose own sister was already one of the shah's wives.[40] Four years later ᶜAbbas, along with the renegade Giorgi Saaḳadze, invaded Georgia and drove both Teimuraz and Luarsab from their kingdoms. Spontaneous resistance to the Persian occupation broke out in both east and west Georgia, and Teimuraz not only joined the Ḳakhetian nobles as their national leader, but also approached both the Turks and the Russians for aid in regaining his throne. In 1620, after Teimuraz took refuge in Istanbul, ᶜAbbas indulged in multiple acts of vengeance: after ravaging Ḳakheti he had Teimuraz's sons castrated, King Luarsab strangled, and Teimuraz's mother, Ketevan, killed by being cut to pieces. ‘Before each cut [the executioner] said “Become a Muslim”, but she replied “Never”.’ Ketevan was accordingly canonized as a martyr by the Georgian Orthodox Church.[41]

Under the Persians the Bagratid royal family was not suppressed, but those princes who were given the rank of viceroy (*vali*) in Georgia, and other Georgians who moved to Persia to serve the shah, mainly as military officers, were obliged to become Muslims and adopt Arabic names. Some occupied influential positions in the state: the prince who succeeded ᶜAbbas I was his grandson, Shah Safi (1629–42), and the courtier instrumental in his coronation was a Georgian – Khosro Mirza, the prefect of Isfahan – an illegitimate scion of the Bagrationi family, brought up in Persia as a Muslim under the name Rustam Khan (Georgianized as ‘King Rosṭom’). Safi appointed him as viceroy in Tbilisi and king of Kartli (1632–58). Although Rosṭom has been called ‘one of the most accomplished of the Georgian kings’, in 1638 Teimuraz I challenged his authority by occupying Ḳakheti, his own former seat, and embarked upon a career of vengeance by raiding enemies in various parts of Georgia, until in 1648 King Rosṭom persuaded him to settle in the capital of Imereti, Kutaisi.[42]

The shahs recruited many Georgians for their armies: a Georgian cavalry corps was formed by ᶜAbbas I (no doubt including some of the 130,000 Georgian prisoners held in Persia), while 100 years later under Shah Nadir, King Ereḳle II of Ḳakheti commanded Georgian troops fighting in India.[43] The Georgians’ renown as fighting men was no doubt a psychological asset to them (although displayed all too often in fighting among themselves), but it was a liability in the Persian context. Georgia was considered by the Persians as part of their empire, and its warriors as a valuable resource, called upon to render service to the shah in particularly onerous conflicts. Among the most notable Georgian warriors were King Rosṭom and Giorgi XI (1678–88, 1703–9) – Islamized as Husain Quli-Khan – who as governor-general of Qandahar was killed fighting rebels in Afghanistan: ‘Out of the whole Perso-Georgian army, only seven hundred men escaped. Not only did the catastrophes at Qandahar spell ruin for the feeble Safavi regime; they deprived Georgia of the flower of her generals and manpower at a time when she could least afford to spare them.’[44] Not all Georgian troops in Persian service were officers; many more were in the ranks. Had they been mercenaries there would at least have been payment for their services and sufferings, but they were treated as feudal levies, receiving no reward other than the usual share in loot. Thus many of Georgia's young men were sacrificed in the dubious causes of irresponsible shahs, instead of employing their talents in the service of their own land. Mass abduction was used by Persia as a means of obtaining slaves and keeping Georgia and Armenia in submission. In the sixteenth century Shah Tahmasp deported over 30,000 Georgians (many of them as soldiers for his bodyguard) while in the seventeenth century ᶜAbbas I had 100,000 Georgians deported from Ḳakheti and 10,000 massacred, allowing

Azerbaijanis to settle in their place. A century later Nadir Shah deported 5,000 Georgian families to Khorasan, and slaves and girls for the harem were regularly exacted as tribute.[45]

Daghestan

For centuries Daghestanis preyed upon Georgia, where their incursions were, not always accurately, blamed on ‘the Lezgins’ – perhaps because the Lezgis were one of the most numerous peoples of Daghestan, whose homeland in the Samur valley was among the nearest to Ḳakheti and other eastern provinces of Georgia. Undeniably a great menace to Georgia, these Daghestani raiders – frequently incited by Persian or Turkish rulers – were in fact ethnically mixed forces, often under Avar leadership. European writers, echoing the Georgians, have also tended to view the Daghestanis as stereotype villains, adequately described in such stock phrases as ‘Lezghian raiders’ or ‘warlike Lezghian tribesmen’, ‘those inveterate foes of both Georgians and Russians’.[46] One of the earliest instances of Lezgi involvement in strife among Georgia's ruling families was in the twelfth century, when after the death of King Davit the Builder (1125) his son Demeṭre ‘mustered many men in Kartli, Akhaltsikhe and the Lezgian provinces…in order to dethrone King Giorgi, his uncle’. In the sixteenth century King Levan of Ḳakheti (1520–74), who ‘steered a careful course for Persian favour’ by assisting Shah Tahmasp against rebellious emirs in Shirvan, employed ‘a vigorous border policy’ which ‘kept…[his] land clean of Lazghi raids’. In 1568 it was Shah Tahmasp who organized the Lezgis, the Kumuks, Dawud-Vali (the king's renegade brother) and Persian troops for a combined attack on King Svimon in Tbilisi. Shah ᶜAbbas was responsible for launching another Daghestani assault in

1616, this time on Kakheti: ‘He wrote to the Lezgis, “I intend to annihilate the Kakhetians, so destroy or imprison any who enter your mountains, and I will reward you generously”, and they were delighted to comply. Some Kakhetians fled to refuges among the gorges, mountains and forests of the Pshavs, Khevsurs and Tushes, but the Lezgis dealt with them as they had promised the Shah.’ It should be noted, however, that ‘Although the Lezgis fought hard, the Kakhs also killed many of them…because the Lezgis could not beat them in open country.’[47]

The increase in Daghestani raiding in the seventeenth century has been attributed on the one hand to ‘the collapse of strong and relatively ordered government in Georgia and north-west Persia, and the grave depopulation which was proceeding in Georgia’, and on the other hand to the ‘poverty and the multiplication of the population in the mountains…[which] impelled the hungry tribesmen to go as raiders…into the [Georgian] provinces where they had formerly sought their livelihood as soldiers, cameleers and labourers’.[48] Much of the strife which occurred in and around Daghestan was fuelled by religion. The establishment of the Safavid dynasty in Persia gave new impetus to Shi^{c}ism, which was hated by the Sunnite guardians of orthodoxy, to whom Shi^{c}i beliefs and practices were (as, in the absence of any reform movement in Islam, they still are in the twenty-first century) simply heresy, which Sunnis are committed to destroying with all the fury of medieval fanaticism. In Daghestan this antagonism generated additional confusion because, while most Daghestanis were Sunnis, their clerics, rulers and warriors were largely Shi^{c}i.

Meanwhile the Persians’ interference continued to cause trouble in Georgia. In 1721 the renegade Muhammad Quli-

Khan (alias King Ḳonsṭanṭine II of Ḳakheti), with the shah's collusion, attacked King Vakhtang VI of Kartli (‘Husain Quli-Khan’) with the aim of usurping his throne. Vakhtang, ‘defying the efforts of the Persian potentate…shut himself up in the Tbilisi citadel to defend…[his] heritage. Muḥammad, however, bringing up Lezgian reinforcements, expelled Vakhtang…and occupied Tbilisi. Then Vakhtang, in his fury and despair, called in the Turks and surrendered his domains to them.’[49]

As we have seen, it was not difficult for the Turks to mount invasions of Azerbaijan and Shirvan eastward from Anatolia via Diyarbakr and Ottoman-occupied Armenia, although the long line of communication and the rigours of winter on the plateau made timely withdrawal essential. An alternative route allowed expeditions from the sultan's Tatar fief in Crimea to cross the Don and enter Daghestan from the north to attack the Persians in Darband and Shirvan. Thus Daghestan too was drawn into the Persian--Turkish wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the sultan could influence fellow Sunnis there. Some Daghestani rulers, such as the Kaitagh *utsmi*, supported revolts led by deposed Shirvani rulers, and became targets for the shah's vengeance. The alternative, for those who remained loyal to Persia, as did the Kumuk *shamkhal*s, was to face attacks by the Ottomans and Crimeans.[50] As we have seen, sporadic anti-Persian uprisings in Darband and Shirvan invited Persian punitive expeditions, and in 1538 the Shirvan state had come to an end, disintegrating into small principalities under puppet rulers appointed by the shah of Persia. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Turkey and Persia contended for the support of local rulers in Daghestan and incited conflicts between them, and the Persians’ oppression of those who did not submit to them was ruthless, especially under Nadir Shah (1736–47) and ^{c}Agha Muhammad (c. 1785–97).[51]

Armenia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

The frequent wars between Turkey and Persia for possession of Armenia, which lasted until 1639, led to the total collapse of its economy, and the impoverishment and homelessness of the native population caused mass emigration of Armenians to other lands. As Armenia's settlements fell into general disrepair while creative life and construction ceased, the result was the loss of architectural and artistic traditions which had grown up over centuries. No churches or other buildings were built comparable in quality with those left by the high Middle Ages, and nothing was produced on a scale larger than traditional *khachkar* carved stone crosses.[52]

A history of Armenian architecture published towards the end of Russia's communist régime strayed beyond its ideological limits to present facts usually suppressed by the censor: ‘In periods when the Armenian people was deprived of its statehood, it was the Armenian Church which strove, as far as possible, to keep the people together, and…to express its interests and aspirations.’[53] The location of the centre of the Armenian Church and seat of its catholicos illustrates Armenia's centuries-long territorial insecurity: originally at Echmiadzin near Yerevan, it was transferred to Dvin in 485, where it stayed until 927, then moving to various other locations within the historic limits of Armenia until 1149 when, because of the Seljuq invasion, it moved to Sis, in Cilician Armenia. In 1441, however, when the Ottoman frontier of annexation in Anatolia came perilously close, while conditions in the old Armenian homeland under the

White and Black Sheep Turkmen emirates seemed more favourable, the Church hierarchy returned to Echmiadzin (while maintaining the separate catholicosate at Sis until the nineteenth century). As soon as economic conditions allowed, the Echmiadzin catholicosate began the restoration of old churches and monasteries and the building of new ones, not only in the Ararat plain but also, for instance, in the Armenian lands east of Lake Sevan: Syunik, Nakhchavan and Karabagh.[54]

By the sixteenth century, western Georgia and Armenia were under Turkish occupation, and transformed into Ottoman provinces (*pashalyk*s) – Akhaltsikhe, Kars, Bayezid and Erzurum. (Here the minority of Armenians who converted to Islam became known as Khemshins.)[55] The Armenians under Ottoman rule became a diaspora, spread far and wide in the empire, and 'Armenia' became merely a geographical and historical concept, and no longer a state or even a province. Only in the east, in Nakhchavan (Syunik) and Karabagh (Artsakh), did Armenian leaders (bearing the Arabic title *melik*s 'kings') succeed in organizing self-defence and sporadic uprisings against their Persian--Azerbaijani overlords.[56] The lasting relics of this are *aparank*s – fortified residences based on the traditional east-Armenian dwelling called *glkhatun* 'house with a head'[57] from the central dome providing a smoke-hole above the main room. The building of *aparank*s revived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in south-eastern Armenia – Nakhchavan and Karabagh – and they served as pockets of resistance in their struggle against Persian or Turkish domination. Provincial princes called by the Arabic word *melik* – many having their own armies and ranking as constables – lived in *aparank*-castles, with their monumental construction in stone and lime, surrounded by stout defensive walls and observation towers. Among such petty barons in Syunik were the *melik*s Barkhudar of Tekh, Aykaz of Khnatsakh and Paramaz of Khndzoresk; in Artsakh, those of *melik*s Ovsep and Avraam-Sparapet in Gülistan; and in what is now known as Highland Karabagh (Azerbaijani *Daghlyg Garabagh*) those of Adam of Mokhratakh, Alaverdyan of Gülatakh, Shahnazaryan of Chanakhchi, Dolukhanyan of Tukhnakal, Avan-Sparapet of Sghnakhe and Egan of Tokh-Gadrud.[58]

Up to the eighteenth century, religious antagonism between Muslims and Christians was not in itself a main cause of conflicts in the Caucasus. However, by the nature of Islam, Christians, like Jews, were second-class citizens subject to discrimination and the payment of a special tax, *kharaj*, and since Muslims could not be slaves it was the non-Muslim population who were subject to enslavement. In the Ottoman Empire non-Muslims, forming the rightless class of *rai*^{c}*yat*, had to wear distinctive clothing and make way for Muslims. As they were also forbidden to carry arms or ride on horseback, and their testimony was not accepted in court, they were in a seriously inferior social position and thus at the mercy of any Turk, who could ill-treat or kill them with impunity, and abduct Armenian children as slaves. Theoretically, Christians and Jews (unlike pagans) were entitled to respect under Islamic law as ‘people of the book’. Each was recognized as a ‘nation’ (*millet*)[59] of the empire, and their religions and places of worship were usually tolerated. Armenians were useful to the Turks as hard-working people, craftsmen, architects, and money-lenders and merchants with contacts throughout the Near East, Europe, Persia and India. As Sultan Muhammad II (1451–81) established an Armenian patriarchate and cathedral in Istanbul, where in the late eighteenth century there was an Armenian community of c. 200,000, it can be said that even under Ottoman rule Armenian culture flourished to some extent.[60]

Much more systematic in their exploitation of both Armenians and Georgians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the Persian shahs. This was a time of increasing penetration of Iran by commercial explorers from Europe, and of the flourishing of Iran's cities, partly as a result of new foreign trade relations. European visitors were free, and brought with them diplomatic cover from their governments and the names of semi-official trade organizations, such as the British East India Company. Caucasians, however – Armenians as traders and Georgians as soldiers – were treated by the shahs as slaves (*ghulam*s), and subjected to much coercion. The most ruthless operation was carried out under Shah ^{c}Abbas I (ruled 1587–1629) when thousands of Armenians from Jugha (or Julfa) on Turkey's Araxes frontier, many of them chosen for their experience in silk production and trade, were forced to walk some 500 miles south to Isfahan. Here the shah set up a 'New Julfa' (Armenian 'Nor Jugha') as a silk-trade centre. The Armenian exiles, important as they were to the Persian state, enjoyed relative freedom, with a degree of self-government, to practise Christianity and develop their textile trade, in which co-operation with European merchants, including the East India Company, was important.[61] However, the Armenians still dominated commerce – having

> spread their interests into internal trade too, setting up shops in the bazaars, with a network of contacts throughout the country. Against this monopoly the efforts of the English and Dutch merchants were ineffective…[From the 1630s] the Armenian control of the market was almost complete…However, after

> difficulties with the Mughal authorities in the 1680s… the East India Company turned seriously to Persia again and sought Armenian cooperation…Armenian interests expanded in India both on their own and with Dutch and English assistance…[until] in the 1660s Khw āja Mīnas, originally from Isfahan, was operating…on a large scale…as principal buyer and creditor to the East India Company…and as the owner of much shipping.[62]

Meanwhile the Russians had become the biggest competitors in the Persian trade, far outdoing the other Europeans by the size and opulence of their caravans, which were also embassies from the tsar.[63]

An important development in the seventeenth century was the establishment of an Armenian community in Venice (which exists to the present day), and the emergence of an Armenian Catholic Church founded by the Jesuit convert Mkhitar Sebastatsi. The scholarship of the Mkhitarist movement created an awareness of Armenian culture in Europe, but the new church provoked such strong opposition from Armenia's Gregorian clergy that a schism developed in the nineteenth century.

The Armenians were the first Caucasian people to introduce book-printing, with presses in Venice (1512), Nakhchavan (Julfa, 1637) and Amsterdam (1660). Georgian printing came later, the first books being published in Rome (1629), Moscow (1705) and Tbilisi (1709). An interest in printing was also shown by the Shirvan-shah in the seventeenth century; books printed in Turkish Arabic script appeared in Rome as early as 1594, and in Istanbul from

1727 but – apart from Tsar Peter I's campaign printing press on which propaganda leaflets in Arabic (Kazan Tatar) script were produced to explain to North Caucasus rulers the reasons for his invasion of Persia in 1722 – there was no typography in Azerbaijan or Persia itself until the nineteenth century.[64]

Of the Armenian writers of the eighteenth century Sayat-Nova, at one time court poet to the king of Georgia, won acclaim for his poems written in Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani. Other writers – Iosif Emin, Movses Bagramyan and Shaamir Shaamiryan – were influenced by the humanist and democratic spirit of the European Enlightenment, which nourished patriotism and the idea of armed rebellion against Turkish tyranny.[65] A work of another kind, providing a highly personal picture of life in the western Caucasus in the late eighteenth century, is the autobiography of Yarutiwn Vagharshaptsi (known in Russian as Artemiy Araratskiy) who was an infant when his father, a skilled stonemason living near Vagharshapat (now Echmiadzin), died in 1774, leaving his mother penniless to bring up three children. Nevertheless she taught him to read and write, so that he could read the lessons in church and might become a priest. His troubles began when the elders of the church had him ejected because it was presumptuous of a poor widow's son to learn to read. His mother then tells him the story of her own misfortunes:

> I was born in Gazakh of respectable parents in 1751, and lost my father when I was two…Two years later, the Lezgis…were constantly raiding Georgia…and our district was suffering such famine that people were reduced to eating grass, like cattle…My mother (your grandmother), seeing that she and I would certainly

> perish from hunger, robbery or violence if we remained where we were, set off with me to walk to Yerevan, intending to reach Vagharshapat, where people were living in peace and plenty and my elder sister was married to quite a well-off man. Two days into our journey, however, Lezgis attacked our caravan and stole everything. They killed the old men and captured the young ones, and me along with them. As my mother was old and weak they stripped her of all her clothing and left her lying there, naked and helpless. Some time later in the Persian city of Ganja they sold me to a highly placed Persian named Cholokh Safar-bek, who, being a sensitive person, took pity on my youth and did not treat me as a slave, but brought me up like his own daughter and had me taught Persian reading and writing and religion. Two years later, as I showed good progress in my studies and Safar-bek saw that his human kindness to me had not been wasted, he decided to adopt me into his family, and had me betrothed, at the age of seven, to his own son, with a marriage contract drawn up by his mullah. Four years later, when I became eleven, my benefactor fixed the date for my wedding – but at that very time my betrothed became very ill.

The girl's mother, meanwhile, after recovering from her encounter with the Lezgis, begins searching for her daughter, begging as she goes, to collect money for the girl's ransom. Eventually she comes to Ganja, where the Armenians whom she questioned advise her to consult Safar-bek. In his harem she encounters her own daughter, but when she tells him her story his anger is so great that he has her beaten and thrown into prison, and both women suffer many more hardships before they escape to Armenia.[66]

The North Caucasus peoples up to the eighteenth century

The countries clustered around the highest central Caucasus peaks – Circassia, Osetia, Ingushia and Chechenia to the north, and the Georgian mountain strongholds of the Svans, Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes on the southern side – remained the least directly affected by the outside world in the eighteenth century. An example of their cultural conservatism was the chain-mail armour and helmets worn by the Khevsurs and Circassians, and their use of bows and arrows up to the early nineteenth century, although firearms had reached North Caucasus by the eighteenth century, and were gradually adopted by all its peoples. Like all men in North Caucasus and Daghestan, the Circassians were sober in their costume, valuing most the weapons they always wore – particularly the long dagger and sabre – and they were renowned for the fine horses they bred and their daring horsemanship. Circassians were often recruited as mercenaries by the Georgians, especially under King Erekle II, when they formed a significant contingent of his army fighting the Azerbaijani khans. In addition to their warlike traditions, the Kabardans of east Circassia enjoyed special status as ‘the richest and most powerful people in the Caucasus’.[67] They considered themselves as overlords of the whole Terek basin from Elbrus to Ingushia, and their superiority as a school of culture and manners was universally acknowledged. It was probably among the Kabardans that the typical costume of Caucasian men developed: the ‘*cherkeska*’[68] coat, fitting at the waist and with cartridge-pouches across the chest, soft leather boots, sheepskin hat and *burka* – a wide-shouldered cape of felted wool. Many elements of female dress were also common to all the mountain peoples.[69]

Of all Caucasian peoples, the Kabardans and other Adygs had the most elaborate system of social classes, with up to eleven categories, from slaves (originally war captives), through rightless serfs bound to their master's land, and former serfs who had received personal freedom but were still obliged to labour for the landowner, to freemen belonging to rural communes – although these too had feudal superiors. A class of petty landowners (*uork*s – who fell into four categories) possessed small estates with serfs and slaves attached and, as vassals of the nobles, formed the latters' troops of warriors. The aristocracy included two categories of greater landowners, including those who were free to depart from the prince, taking their peasants with them. At the apex, the princes (*pshchy*) wielded unlimited power over all their subjects, including the administration of unlimited punishments: 'In Greater and Lesser Kabarda the prince's will was law.'[70] Among the other Circassian peoples class relations were somewhat less rigid than in Kabarda,[71] but every prince had his retinue of hundreds of men, and every Circassian freeman was obliged to possess a thoroughbred horse, a shield, a bow and arrows, a sword and spears. These armies were sometimes hired out to other rulers, as in 1752, when Erekle II obtained the services of 1,500 warriors belonging to Princes Kazi Minbulatov and Kanchoka Gilakhstan of Lesser Kabarda for driving the Persians out of Georgia.[72]

Religions in North Caucasus varied widely. Animist beliefs, with blood sacrifice performed in sacred groves, remained particularly strong among the Adyg--Circassian peoples of the north-west – Abkhaz, Adyges, Abazas, Abadzekhs, Ubykhs and Kabardans – and their Turkic neighbours among the highest mountains, the Karachays and Balkars. Nearly all of these peoples had gone through a Christian phase in the Middle Ages, before becoming converted to Islam: the Kabardans from the fifteenth century, the Chechens in the sixteenth and the Ingush not until the eighteenth. Along the Black Sea coast the Ottomans began to impose Islam on the Adyges and Abkhaz in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, along with the west Georgian principalities. During the same period the Karachays, some Osetians and most of the Abazas also became Muslim (the final conversion of the latter occurring only in the nineteenth century) thus completing the near-encirclement of Christian Georgia.[73]

The central location in North Caucasus was occupied by the Osetians, who were closely associated with Kabardan overlords, and paid them tribute. Islam came to the Digor Osetians by way of Kabarda, but the general pattern of Islamization in Osetia was that only the upper class became Muslim while the peasants kept their Animist beliefs and Christianity. Osetia consisted of five communities inhabiting river gorges, each with a different social structure. The Digors, living in the Urukh gorge, had an upper class closely connected with the Kabardan aristocracy by intermarriage and the Kabardan system of *atalyk* – lifelong bonds created by 'fathering', when a son of one family was brought up in the household of another. Below this came the freeman class, enjoying the right to use the lords' land; then a category arising from offspring of a lord and a female commoner, who were serfs; and finally slaves without rights. In contrast with this, the two Osetian communities to the east – the Alagirs in the Ardon valley and the Kurtatas on the Fiagdon – had no formal class divisions and no regular subordination to Kabarda. However, the most easterly community, the Tagaurs, who inhabited not only the Gizeldon gorge, but also that of the Terek pass through which the road to Georgia lies, had class divisions similar to those of the Digors (significantly, their slaves were called *gurdziag*s – ‘people from Georgia’). The fifth ethnic group of Osetians were the Tuallags, who lived south of the mountains and were subject to Georgian feudal lords. Most Osetians spoke the Ir (or Iron) dialect of their Iranian language, but a linguistic distinction based on religion arose as the speech of the Digors absorbed Islamic vocabulary not shared with the others.[74]

A certain reciprocality in relations between Osetians and Kabardans arose from the fact that, while the former needed access to winter pastures in the large region of the Terek lowlands known as ‘Lesser Kabarda’, lying east and south of the middle Terek,[75] it was just as essential for the Kabardans to utilize the Osetian mountain pastures in summer, so that in their seasonal transhumance with their herds they passed through each others’ territories. Linguistic borrowing was also mutual, with numerous everyday Kabardan words in Osetian, and Osetian words in Kabardan.[76]

To the east of the Osetians, the Ingush and Chechens (who call themselves *Ghalghai* and *Nokhcho* respectively, and collectively *Vaynakh*s) lived partly in the mountains and partly among the wooded foothills and the plain. Like all North Caucasus and Daghestan peoples, the Chechens lived by cultivating the land – with great frugality in the mountains, where such soil as there was around the scattered rocky villages (*aul*s), many of them located up beyond the steep valleys in remote gorges, had to be laboriously formed into terraces. Like the Circassians and Osetians they respected a man's skill in stealing as well as his courage in battle, so that

Russian visitors considered them to be incorrigible thieves. As with all Caucasian peoples, blood-vengeance for violence or insult toward any member of one's clan was an absolute duty among the Vaynakhs, as were the customs of obligatory protection of a guest, adoption of a friend as a sworn brother (Turkic *kunak*, Georgian *dzmobili*) and bride abduction.[77] As the Chechens and Ingush were frequently in conflict with outsiders, or among themselves because of their code of honour, their dwellings typically included two- to five-storey stone towers – often architecurally elegant – where they could take refuge from enemies.[78]

South of the Ingush and Chechens the nearest neighbours were the Georgian ‘mountain people’ (*mokheve*) and the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, inhabiting the gorges east of the Terek and Aragvi, who were nominally subject to the kings of Kakheti or Imereti. Like other mountain communities, including the Svans of the north-west (Svaneti), the Georgians of the high gorges had little acquaintance with either Christianity or Islam, and adhered to Animist beliefs, with blood sacrifice performed by priests, right up to the twentieth century. Although speaking dialects of Georgian (or, in the case of the Svans, a separate language) and in their way of life these ‘people of the gorges’ to the east of the Darial pass were more like those in Chechenia and Daghestan. Relying on subsistence agriculture, herding and hunting, they enjoyed few comforts, and were given to frequent feuding. The Khevsurs – both women and men – stood out from all other Caucasian peoples by their costume, which was embroidered with colourful patterns, including crosses. Unlike the Muslims of the lowlands, the Georgian mountain tribes’ fierce love of independence and readiness to fight for it extended to their women, who enjoyed equal rights with men in most matters.[79]

Mountain peoples generally had a less rigid social system than the Georgians or Kabardans. Just as some Osetian communities had four classes but others did not recognize any upper class, in Daghestan the Laks and Dargans had five classes, but the Avars and Lezgis generally had a two-part division into khans and tribesmen. Among the most isolated mountain peoples society was classless: the Svans, Pshavs and Khevsurs were said to have no leaders (except Animist priests among the latter) but as a whole were nominally subject to the Georgians. Similarly, the Chechens and Ingush prided themselves on their individual independence and equality, and recognized no social divisions among themselves – although those in the Terek plain lived under Kabardan overlords. In Daghestan the Kumuk aristocracy enjoyed status and authority somewhat similar to that of the Kabardans. For instance, the heads of richer families among the mountain peoples had adopted *atalyk*, having their sons brought up in families in Kumuk settlements in order to learn their Turkic language, which, apart from its general usefulness (later enhanced when Tsar Nicholas I designated Kumuk as the official lingua franca in North Caucasus), lent a certain status to a young man seeking a bride.[80]

Georgia as a vassal state

After its medieval high point under Queen Tamar and Giorgi IV Lasha, Georgia had suffered many decades of domination by the Mongols and their successors during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and only briefly regained some stability under King Aleksandre I (1412–43) before once again losing the continuity of an established monarchy and falling apart into three kingdoms and numerous principalities. Several generations of the Bagratids were obsessed with seizing power over their patrimonies and fighting among themselves instead of co-operating to preserve a united Georgian state, which would have improved their chances of survival among their predatory neighbours. Not only did the realm disintegrate into its main constituents – Kartli and Ḳakheti east of the Likhi mountains and Imereti to the west, each under its own king – but the taste for autonomy and separation spread to the rulers of other smaller regions in western Georgia. The most significant of these were the dynasties of Samtskhe-Saatabago (the Jaqelis), Megrelia (the Dadianis), Svaneti (the Gelovanis), Guria (the Gurielis) and Abkhazeti (the Sharvashidzes, who ranked as viceroys) (see Map 19).[81] The culmination of this unbridled self-interest was a vicious civil war which raged in eastern Georgia in the middle of the seventeenth century, further deepening the existing divisions.[82]

The main reason for this demoralization of Georgia's rulers was that more than half of their country had become a province of the Persian Empire. The process began in 1614–16, when Shah ^{c}Abbas I, having subjugated Kartli and Ḳakheti,

> did not completely suppress the royal Bagratid line [but]…contented [himself] in K'art'li with arrogating the right to nominate as [his] *vali* or viceroy…whichever of the Bagratid princes seemed most amenable to Persian interests. In the Persian hierarchy, the viceroy of Georgia ranked as the third of the grand emirs, immediately following those of Arabistan and Luristan. The shahs made it a condition that the viceroys of K'art'li outwardly…abjure Christianity and embrace Shi^{c}a Mohammedanism…Among the Georgians, the shah's viceroy was still known by the

> title of *mep'e* or king, as previously. Internally, he retained virtually absolute power over his subjects… but had to refer questions of war and foreign affairs to his overlord, the shah.[83]

^{c}Abbas II redivided eastern Georgia into the old kingdoms of Kartli and Ḳakheti with consequences more drastic than this description suggests. It suffered much direct interference and military intervention by local Persian garrisons, and punitive raids by Kyzylbash tribesmen. But the country was also plagued by internecine strife not only between these two kingdoms but conflicts initiated by the regional 'dukes', the *eristavi*s, and by Georgian and non-Georgian mountain peoples.

The fall of the national monarchy and the dominance of Persia and Turkey also led to the decline of the Georgian Orthodox Church, whose authority became divided. The catholicos of Mtskheta now ruled over only Kartli, while in Imereti the king revived the catholicosate of Abkhazeti, which 'exercised a shadowy authority over the western Caucasus'; the metropolitan of Bedia headed the Megrelian church; and in Guria the bishop of Shemokhmedi became autonomous. In Ḳakheti, too, the secession of the temporal ruler was reflected in that of the bishopric of Alaverdi. In general, according to one historian, '[Georgia's] nobles, demoralized by the humiliating political conditions, which often compelled them to embrace Islam, to send their sons in hostage to be educated by the mullahs of Isfahan, or to give their daughters into Persian or Turkish harîms, had assumed a cynical indifference towards their religion.'[84]

In western Georgia, Ottoman expansion in 1500–50 swallowed up several principalities, some of which still lie within Turkey today. These were Lazistan on the Black Sea coastland from Batumi to Trebizond, and Klarjeti and Tao in the southern mountains towards Erzurum, whose Georgian generals had held important posts under the Byzantine Empire in the tenth--eleventh centuries. Overrun by the Ottomans, the inhabitants of this region became converted to Islam and Turkicized in language.[85] Nearer to central Georgia, the principality of Samtskhe (Meskheti) on the upper course of the Kura was similarly conquered by Turkey after a long contest with Persia, and its Georgian rulers adopted Islam in order to retain their lands, in exchange for service in the sultan's army. In 1625 the main city, Akhaltsikhe (Georgian ‘Newcastle’), became the centre of a Turkish *pashalyk* under the Georgian Beka (known in Turkish as Safar-Pasha), and Acharia became the main Ottoman base. Most other provinces of western Georgia were also subjugated by the sultan, but were less thoroughly Turkicized than Samtskhe. After its conquest by Russia in the nineteenth century, however, the Muslim Georgians of Meskheti were designated as ‘Turks’ and, as Muslim landowners were deprived of their rights, many of them moved to Turkey. Even those who chose to remain in Georgia were excluded from the schools opened by the Russians, so that they too sent their children to Turkey to be educated. The remaining Georgian Muslims are said to have become increasingly Turkicized, but at the end of the nineteenth century those peasants of Akhaltsikhe who were Christians still spoke Georgian, and even the Muslim majority knew Georgian as well as Turkish. The name ‘Meskhetian Turks’ subsequently attached to the Meskhis was inaccurate, since they were no less Georgian than the population of Kartli or Megrelia – although as Muslims they were considered to be aliens.[86]

The anarchy and ruin accompanying Georgia's disintegration have been presented by some observers in terms of total, ubiquitous misery and barbarism throughout the land,[87] but something less apocalyptic seems more probable. One recent Georgian commentator points out that, despite the prevailing disunity,

> In every kingdom and principality, cultural development to some extent continued in the all-Georgian tradition. For example, in Samtskhe-Saatabago beautiful Georgian churches and monasteries were constructed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The idea of reunification never died out entirely, but every ‘strong ruler’ considered himself ‘the Reunifier’ and this always meant fresh bloodshed. The new kingdoms and principalities were not centralized states either; each strong vassal attempted to make himself independent. It is of note that all the monarchs of Georgian States and the nobility, if they followed the Christian orthodoxy, traditionally considered themselves *kartveli* (Georgian), whereas if they converted to Islam they were called *tatari*, ‘Tartars’, the common Georgian name for all Muslim, predominantly Turkic, peoples living to the south.[88]

One result of Georgia's west--east division was that each half of the country had its own troubled frontier, where they separately faced menacing neighbours: in the west Turkey, and in the east Persia. Georgia's easternmost kingdom, Kakheti, was an outpost frequently exposed to the first assault of Persian armies invading via Azerbaijan. There was a third frontier in the north, where Osetians from beyond the high Caucasus had for centuries been moving into Georgia. These Osetian migrants, who called themselves Tuallag as opposed to the Tagaurs, Kurtatas and Alagirs living north of the mountains, formed settlements under their own elders, particularly in what they called ‘Tualgom’, ‘Tual-gorge’ (in Georgian ‘Dvaleti’ – ‘Twal-land’; and the Osetians are ‘Dvalebi’).[89] To the east of Osetian Dvaleti another stretch of northern frontier straddled the strategic pass through the Darial gorge which links the North Caucasus plain with Georgia. This narrow defile, leading through the gorge of the Terek to that of the Aragvi, a southward-flowing tributary of the Kura, was flanked by the rocky heights of Georgia on the west and equally rugged mountains inhabited by the Ingush and Chechens on the east. Here, among numerous high valleys and gorges, Georgia's *eristavi*s had a vital part to play in protecting the country from invasion from the north, as well as satisfying their own ambitions.

During the seventeenth century such territories were claimed as personal appanages not only by members of Georgia's royal dynasty, but also by aristocrats of various degrees. The highest ranks, the *tavadebi*,[90] were nobles by birth – descendants of ancient clans with hereditary estates. Other grades of feudal lords, the *eristavebi* and *mtavarebi*, were based on administrative districts to which their ancestors had originally been appointed by kings as governors, but which were now held as properties. In addition there were the *didebulebi*, a category whose personal ennoblement as an honour for services to the king was originally not hereditary, but later became so.[91]

The general lawlessness of life in Georgia in the seventeenth century is exemplified by Giorgi Saakadze, often referred to in Georgian as ‘the great *mouravi*’, from his official rank as the prefect of Tbilisi, Ktskhinvali and Dvaleti, who was notorious as ‘the most dangerous and gifted adventurer [of his day] in Georgian politics’.[92] Saaḳadze was not untypical of officials in using his influence to seize land wherever and by whatever means he could, but he stood out in being unashamedly given ‘to perfidy, slander and treachery, persistently insinuating and goading others to violence’. On the other hand, as he was ‘courageous, audacious, strong and fearless’, he could command admiration, especially for the resounding victory he won in 1609 over a Crimean Tatar army passing through Georgia en route from Baghdad to Turkey. Five years later, however, he was treacherously plotting with Shah ^{c}Abbas the future conquest of Georgia by Persia. Meanwhile the *mouravi* was still intent on personal intrigues against his fellow Georgians. One of Saaḳadze's targets was the young King Luarsab II of Kartli, over whom he succeeded in obtaining personal influence through kinship, by using his own ‘beautiful and flirtatious’ sister as sexual bait to entice the king into marriage. Fortunately, his courtiers quite soon convinced Luarsab of his folly, and a plot was hatched to arrest Saaḳadze. The king's body-servant, however, carried this information to Saaḳadze, who promptly absconded to Persia, where he urged the shah to conquer Kartli and convert it to Islam – as he knew the shah already intended.[93]

As ^{c}Abbas had decided to begin his campaign by attacking Ḳakheti first, he moved secretly to Ganja, as his base for the invasion. The attack on Kartli would follow in winter – recommended by Saaḳadze as the best season, as fugitives from the battlefield could not flee to the mountains then, and would all be captured. Teimuraz of Ḳakheti and Luarsab of Kartli had formed an alliance against the shah, but he, by flattery and deceit, persuaded Luarsab to defect, the result being Luarsab's imprisonment and strangulation in 1622 in Shiraz, and his eventual canonization as a martyr of the Georgian Orthodox Church.[94] Thus,

> Kartli was left without a king, as Luarsab had neither a brother nor a son, and its princes withdrew, each man for himself, and strengthened their own defences. In Ḳakheti Teimuraz again took over, but in 1616, when ᶜAbbas heard this he flew into a fury and attacked first Ḳakheti, then Tbilisi…where he installed as king of Kartli Bagrat, the son of Dawud Khan…a zealous Muslim, devoid of any virtue, who was loathed by the Kartlians…[Then the shah] returned to Ḳakheti and evicted all its inhabitants.[95]

In 1622 the shah was warned of signs of insurrection in Kartli. As he admired and trusted Saaḳadze – especially after they had campaigned together in Baghdad and Qandahar – ᶜAbbas sent him, along with the Kyzylbash commander Karchi Khan, to despoil Ḳakheti and evict the population of Kartli and bring them to Persia. Prince Svimon of Imereti was put on the throne in Kartli in order to disguise the real reason for this invasion. The Kartlians were indeed suspicious when they saw how many Persians had come, but Saaḳadze and his accomplice, the Aragvi *eristavi* Zurab, swore solemnly that the shah had sent Svimon to them with good intentions. Saaḳadze and Zurab then went off to Mukhrani, where they carried out the shah's orders to kill the Ḳakheti lords. However, even Saaḳadze had not suspected ᶜAbbas's duplicity. While out hunting Saaḳadze intercepted a courier carrying a letter from the shah to Karchi which said: ‘As soon as you have annihilated the Ḳakhs and deported the Kartlians, decapitate the *mouravi* and send his head to me.' Saaḳadze then enlisted the assistance of *eristavi* Zurab, informed the Kartli nobles of the shah's intention of eliminating their people, and they attacked the Kyzylbash and killed them all. The main garrisons of Persian troops in Kartli, Ḳakheti and Akhaltsikhe were all slaughtered, and Saaḳadze set up Kaikhosro, son of Vakhtang Mukhranbaṭoni, as puppet king in Tbilisi, while Teimuraz I resumed the throne in Ḳakheti. A series of battles ensued, in which the Georgians lost 9,900 men and the Persians 18,000.[96]

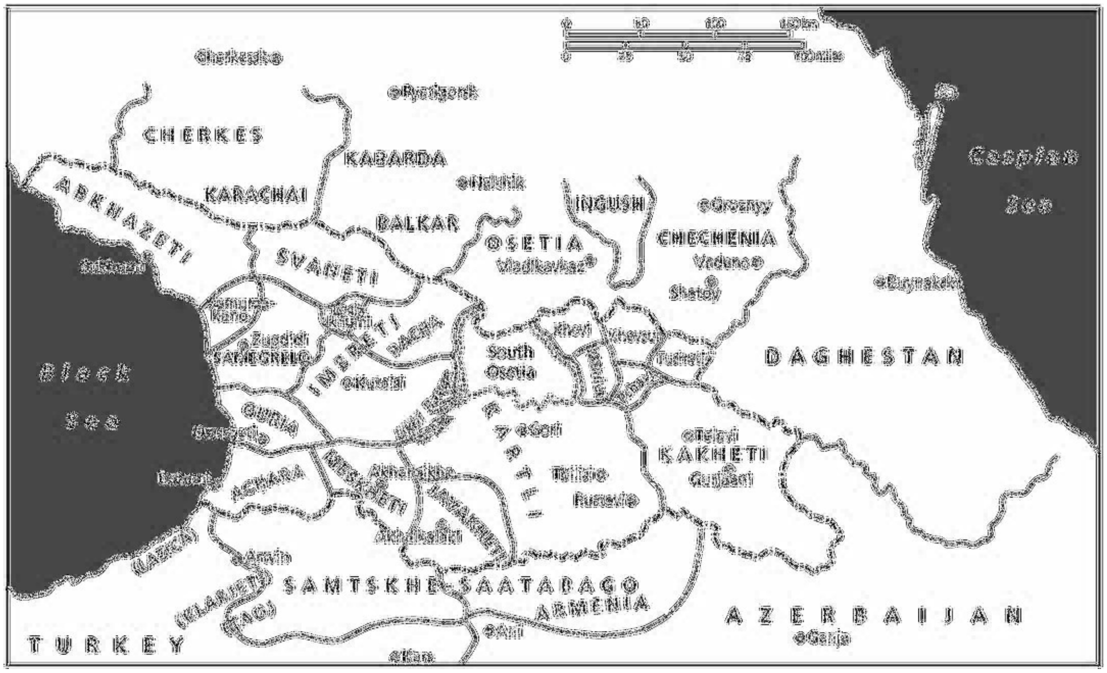
Saaḳadze was the most conspicuous among the early seventeenth-century nobles who appropriated state lands as their own. He made himself practically ruler of Georgia's northern gorges from which the Kura tributaries, Liakhvi and Ksani, descend. Meanwhile on the Darial pass Baadur became the *eristavi* of the Aragvi in 1619 by evicting his brother Zurab, who, after a brief defection to Shah ᶜAbbas, joined Saaḳadze in a successful campaign against the Kyzylbash in 1623. Georgia's authority did not yet extend to the Khevi gorge near Mount Kazbegi or Mtiuleti on the Aragvi, and on the upper Ardon the Tuallags refused to pay tribute until Saaḳadze went there and resubjugated them, while Zurab and Barata Baratashvili subdued the Georgians of Mtiuleti and Khevi. Saaḳadze flourished, but became involved in court intrigues, and after betraying King Luarsab II he had to defect to the Persians. After involvement in Shah ᶜAbbas's plans to massacre the Ḳakhs, Saaḳadze returned to Kartli to head another anti-Persian uprising, but Zurab's intriguing against him at court finally forced Saaḳadze to flee to Turkey, where the sultan had him strangled in 1629 – the same year as Zurab was killed by the new king of Kartli, Teimuraz I (1606–16, 1623–32).[97]

Relations with the peoples of the northern gorges continued to occupy Teimuraz's attention. Both he and Zurab's brother Zaal, who had inherited the Aragvi, hated the new Muslim--Georgian marshal of Kartli, Rostom (known in Persia as 'Khosro-Mirza'). King Teimuraz, knowing the strategic importance of Kakheti, occupied it in 1639 with a view to seizing the upper Aragvi gorge. In the following year he led an expedition against the Dido people of western Daghestan with the dual aim of forcing them to convert from paganism to Orthodoxy, and gaining support from the Russians by opening access to South Caucasus through the mountains: in fact Teimuraz was defeated by the Didos. Fourteen years later, when Teimuraz's son Vakhtang became king of Kartli, Zaal wreaked vengeance on Kyzylbash tribesmen who had violated a Georgian priest, by sending *eristavi* Shalva with a force of Kakhs, Pshavs, Khevsurs and Tushes to destroy the Kyzylbash and recover Kakheti from the Persians. However, this campaign failed, and in 1660 King Vakhtang V (or, in Persian 'Shah-Navaz'), had Zaal killed, as were Shalva and the other leaders.[98]

The Caucasus in the late eighteenth century

Although the existence of many mutually incomprehensible languages was one of the basic facts about the Caucasus, this did not isolate ethnic communities from each other. Inevitably communities developed relations with their neighbours, and patterns of intermixing and communication were established in which certain languages played a key role. Contacts between Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis and their immediate southern neighbours were mainly conducted in Persian or Turkish. Among the mountains of the Great Caucasus the situation was more complicated. In Daghestan, peoples living at higher altitudes – the Avar, Dargo, Laks, Tsakhur, Rutul, Agul, Tabasaran, Lezgi and other shepherd communities – drove their herds down to winter pastures and markets and sold their produce or seasonal labour at towns in the valleys and Caspian lowlands, so that they picked up the languages spoken there: Avar, Kumuk or Azerbaijani. On the Terek Chechens, Osetians, Kabardans, and Armenian merchants visiting market towns north of Daghestan used Kumuk or Nogay as their lingua franca, while in the north-west Circassians and Abkhazians used Nogay or Turkish for trading with foreign merchants. Few Georgians made such seasonal trips until Russian Cossack settlements appeared on the Terek, but contacts were maintained across the high passes of the central Caucasus by north Georgians from Racha and Svaneti, communicating in Georgian, Karachay-Balkar or Osetian.[99]

So far as cultural affinities with other Christian nations are concerned, after 1453 the Georgians and Armenians were the most isolated peoples of the Caucasus, as they each had unique alphabets, and nearly all their neighbours were Muslims. Persia and Turkey were on their doorstep, but it was 700 miles to Isfahan and 840 to Istanbul; Mesopotamia and Syria lay only 310 miles to the south, but Baghdad was 580 miles away. Looking north from Tbilisi towards Orthodox Russia, however, although Astrakhan was only 360 miles away, as long as Turkey's Tatar vassals in Crimea blocked the land route, Moscow remained remote, requiring a journey of some 1,600 miles up the Volga by ship.


0 50 100 150km
0 25 50 75 100miles
Cherkessk
Pyatigorsk
CHERKES
KABARDA
KARACHAI
Nalchik
ABKHAZETI
BALKAR
INGUSH
Groznyy
CHECHENIA
OSETIA
Vladikavkaz
Vedeno
Shatoy
Caspian Sea
Buynaksk
Sukhumi
SVANETI
Samurzakano
Lechkhumi
Zugdidi
SAMEGRELO
IMERETI
RACHA
Kutaisi
South Osetia
Khevi
Khevsureti
Tusheti
DAGHESTAN
Black Sea
GURIA
Ozurgeti
Batumi
ACHARA
MESKHETI
Akhaltsikhe
JAVAKHETI
Akhalkalaki
KARTLI
Gori
Tbilisi
Rustavi
Telavi
KAKHETI
Gurjaani
LAZETI
Artvin
SAMTSKHE-SAATABAGO
KLARJETI
TAO
ARMENIA
Ani
Kars
TURKEY
AZERBAIJAN
Ganja

Map 19 Georgia: its ethnic regions and neighbours in the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries.

[1] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 262–4, 266, 268–9; T. D. Botsvadze, *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza v gruzino-russkikh politicheskikh vzaimootnosheniyakh XVI–XVIII vekov*, Tbilisi, 1974, pp. 15–16.

[2] Some Azerbaijani nationalists turn this historical narrative on its head by presenting sixteenth-century Safavid Azerbaijan not as a part of Iran, but as already a separate, independent state, based on Shirvan, which was victimized not only by the Turks, but equally by ‘shahist Iran’, which ‘extended its domination over neighbouring countries inhabited by Persians, Arabs, [etc.]’ and under ^{c}Abbas I ‘came to represent the interests of the Iranian feudal lords’: A. A. Rakhmani, *Azerbaydzhan v kontse XVI i v XVII veke (1590–1700 gody)*, Baku, 1981, pp. 2, 5.

[3] ‘[T]he Ottomans in Istanbul played the role of Caliphs convincingly enough, defending orthodoxy and providing a political centre for Islam’: Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 84–5.

[4] Some Shiᶜites said the Mahdi would be the seventh imam, others the twelfth, and there were many other opinions: *Ibid*., pp. 364–9.

[5] *Ibid*., pp. 139, 375–6; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, p. 203.

[6] Lewis, *Middle East*, pp. 113–14.

[7] J. R. Walsh, ‘The historiography of Ottoman--Safavid relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’, in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962, pp. 202–3.

[8] *Ibid*., pp. 203–4.

[9] *Ibid*., p. 204.

[10] *Ibid*.

[11] *Ibid*., pp. 204–5.

[12] *Ibid*., pp. 206–7.

[13] Lewis, *Middle East*, pp. 113–14.

[14] In their Turkic language, where ‘black’ is *kara* and ‘white’ is *ak* (often spelt *qara* and *aq* to represent the back pronunciation of *k*), these are respectively the *Kara Koyunlu/Qara Quyunlu* and *Ak Koyunlu/Aq Quyunlu*.

[15] R. Rizvanov and Z. Rizvanov, *Istoriya lezgin: kratkiy nauchno-populyarnyy ocherk*, Makhachkala, 1990, pp. 15–16. See also Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 196, 200–5. Remnants of the Kyzylbash survive today in Persian Azerbaijan, under the name ‘Those who love the Shah’: see ‘Shakhseveny’, in *Narody mira*, pp. 463, 517.

[16] The Kyzylbash suicidal battle cry was ‘To my spiritual leader and master I sacrifice myself!’: Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, p. 214.

[17] Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 97–8: *dhikr*/*zikr*; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 214–16.

[18] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, p. 253.

[19] *Ibid*., pp. 253–5.

[20] *Ibid*., pp. 255–7; Rizvanov and Rizvanov, *Istoriya lezgin*, pp. 16–17; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 209–20.

[21] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 257–74.

[22] *Ibid*., pp. 274–83; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 245, 268.

[23] Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 189–90.

[24] R. Ferrier, ‘Trade from the mid-fourteenth century to the end of the Safavid period’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI, p. 413; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 189, 208–12, 222–5, 228, 243, 249; Roemer, ‘successors of Timur’, pp. 114, 118, 133; Roemer, ‘Türkmen dynasties’, pp. 161–2, 175.

[25] A. S. Sumbatzade, Azerbaydzhantsy, p. 215. The emergence of Azerbaijanian nationality has been attributed by historians to much earlier and much later dates than this.

[26] Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 77, 80–1; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 221–7.

[27] Budagova, Azerbaydzjanskiy yazyk, pp. 5–8.

[28] I. P. Petrushevskiy, *Istoriya Irana s drevneyshikh vremyon do kontsa XVIII veka*, Leningrad, 1958, p. 255, cited in A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 222.

[29] Rakhmani, *Azerbaydzhan*, pp. 200–1.

[30] According to an authoritative reference work on the Turkic languages, Azerbaijani cannot be assigned unambiguously to any single group of Turkic languages, as it shares some features with Turkish and Turkmen, but others with Uzbek and Kumyk. In another scholarly study of the Turkic languages the distribution map shows both Turkish and Azerbaijani in the Oghuz--Seljuq group, with Azerbaijani merging westward across Anatolia into Ottoman Turkish; and a comparison of phonetic and grammatical features reveals overwhelming similarity between Azerbaijani and Turkish: J. Deny *et al.*, eds., *Philologiae Turkicae Fundamenta*, 2 vols.,

Wiesbaden, 1959, vol. I, pp. 190, 280–306; see also *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. II, *Tyurkskiye yazyki*, p. 66.

[31] Arabic script resembles shorthand, as only the twenty-five consonants have letters to represent them – including not only the categories of sounds used e.g. in English, but also velars or ‘gutturals’, much more throaty than Scots ‘loch’; and ‘emphatic’ vowels with the tongue bunched forward or backward. Only three (long) vowels – ā, ī and ū have letter symbols, although far more (short) vowels and diphthongs (*ay* and *ow*) are spoken, and can be indicated by diacritics, but mostly are not. By comparison the sound systems of Turkish and Persian are more like English or German; for Turkish, modifications of the Arabic alphabet was essential to distinguish *a* and *e*, *o* and *ö*, *u* and *ü*, ı and *i*; but the Persians are said mostly to have managed without writing vowel symbols: C. Faulmann, *Das Buch der Schrift. Enthaltend die Schriftzeichen und Alphabete aller Zeiten und aller Völker des Erdkreises*, 2nd enlarged and improved edn, Vienna, 1880, pp. 97, 101–4, 107–11.

[32] Soon after the USSR was formed a genuine attempt was made to create a ‘universal’ Latin phonetic alphabet to replace Arabic script. Some people even proposed that this (‘revolutionary’!) alphabet should replace the Cyrillic alphabet for Russian. This heresy was, however, firmly suppressed, and in 1937 another ‘reform’ imposed the Russian alphabet on languages formerly written in Arabic script.

[33] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 248, 252–70; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 190, 198–211, 217–21; *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, pp. 394–5. The ethnic origins of the Safavi shahs, the role of the Turkmens and of

Shi^{c}ah Islam have been topics of furious controversy among Azerbaijanian and Iranian nationalists: see articles by M. H. Heydarov and O. A. Efendiev on ‘bourgeois falsifiers of the history and culture of Azerbaijan’ in S. Sumbatzade, ed., *Protiv burzhuaznykh falsifikatorov istorii i kultury Azerbaydzhana/ Azärbaijanyn tarikh vä Mädäniyyätinin burzhua sakh alashdyrynylaryna garshy*, Baku, 1978, pp. 67–77, 125–40.

[34] Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 220–5, 240–4, 257–8, 260–1, 267–8, 283–5.

[35] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 228–32, 235–7, 239, 241.

[36] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 142–205; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. V, pp. 493, 495; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 19–25; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 210–11; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 220; Suny, *Making*, pp. 46–57.

[37] Allen, ed., Russian Embassies, vol. I, pp. 56–7, 339–40; vol. II, p. 590 n. 5(a)1; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 36–49, 55–62, 241, 299–304.

[38] Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 142, 302, gives two different versions of the story.

[39] *Ibid*., pp. 139–43.

[40] *Ibid*., pp. 49, 144–5, 302.

[41] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 144–5; Lang, *Last Years*, p. 12; Suny, *Making*, pp. 50–1; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 49–50, 52–3, 146–9, 157, 302–3.

[42] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 12–13; Suny, *Making*, p. 53; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 62–3, 150–8, 304.

[43] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 276–7; O. A. Efendiyev, *Azerbaydzhanskoye gosudarstvo Sefevidov*, Baku, 1981, pp. 169–70; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, pp. 493–4; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. IX, p. 798; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 210–11; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 21, 94–5, 142; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 220; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 161–2; Roemer, 'Safavid period', pp. 246, 265, 271–2, 285; R. M. Savory, 'The Safavid administrative system', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI, pp. 363–5; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 229–31.

[44] Lang, *Last Years*, p. 102.

[45] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 148; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 96–102, 112, 285; Roemer, 'Safavid period', pp. 315, 321–2, 324; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, p. 304.

[46] Lang, *Modern History*, pp. 36, 41, 44, 48, 55; see also Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 151.

[47] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 140, 167; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 134–8, 148, 165.

[48] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 183 and n. 1.

[49] D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 111–12, 141, 153; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 39–41, 148, 299.

[50] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 270, 275, 280; Botsvadze, *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza*, p. 20; Efendiyev, *Azerbaydzhanskoye gosudarstvo*, p. 75; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, p. 83; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 268–9, 271–2, 274.

[51] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 273–4, 360–73; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 346; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 142–3.

[52] Harutyunyan, *Kamennaya letopis*, pp. 104–14; Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 272–6; Botsvadze, *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza*, p. 13; Efendiyev, Azerbaydzhanskoye gosudarstvo Sefevidov, pp. 92, 95, 106, 149, 152–7, 180, 199; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 268–73, 284, 289; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 32; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 162; Rakhmani, *Azerbaydzhan*, pp. 24, 65–76; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 218–25, 245–6, 285–6.

[53] Harutyunyan, *Kamennaya letopis*, pp. 104–5.

[54] *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia*, 15th edn, vol. I, p. 566; Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 264–5, 276, 427.

[55] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 218; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 537.

[56] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 452; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 167–70; Walker, ‘Armenian presence’,

pp. 92–7.

[57] From Armenian *glukh* ‘head’ and *ṭun* ‘house’.

[58] Harutyunyan, *Kamennaya letopis*, pp. 104, 107–11; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 495.

[59] In modern Arabic *millat* is defined as ‘religion, belief, nation, rite’: *Al-ıārāᶜd al-dirrīyyāt aṭṭūıāb* [Arabic-English Dictionary], Beirut, 1970. In Turkish *millet* means ‘nation, people, community sharing the same religion’: *The Concise Oxford Turkish Dictionary*.

[60] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 640; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 185.

[61] Ferrier, ‘Trade’, p. 454.

[62] *Ibid*., pp. 457–60, 469.

[63] *Ibid*., pp. 472–4.

[64] A. G. Karimullin, *U istokov tatarskoy knigi (ot nachala vozniknoveniya do 60-kh godov XIX veka)*, Kazan, 1971, pp. 68–77; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 77, 130–6; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 174–5; Rakhmani, *Azerbaydzhan*, p. 211.

[65] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, pp. 640–1; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, p. 134; vol. XX, pp. 256–7; R. G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, 4 vols.,

Berkeley, 1971–96, vol. I, *The First Year, 1918–1919*, p. 9; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 277–8; Lang, *Last Years*, p. 203; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 175, 178–82, 187–8.

[66] *Zhizn Artemiya Araratskogo*, edited by K. N. Grigoryan and R. R. Orbeli, Leningrad, 1980, pp. 8–16.

[67] N. Grabovskiy, 'Prisoyedineniye k Rossii Kabardy', in *Sbornik svedeniy o kavkazskikh gortsakh*, part 9, Tbilisi, 1876, quoted by R. Traho, 'Circassians', *Central Asian Survey*, 1991, 10, 1/2, p. 20, (retranslated into English by the present author).

[68] *Cherkes* is the Russian word for 'a Circassian', and *cherkeska* denotes either a Circassian woman or the typical man's coat that the Kabardans call *tsei* and the Georgians *chokha*: Ye. N. Studenetskaya, *Odezhda narodov Severnogo Kavkaza, XVIII--XX vv.*, Moscow, 1989, pp. 86–7, 90–1.

[69] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 203; Animisov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, p. 82; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 781; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, vol. I, pp. 104–5; V. I. Markovin, 'Pamyatniki zodchestva v gornoy Chechne', in V. I. Markovin, ed., *Severnyy Kavkaz v drevnosti i v sredniye veka*, Moscow, 1980, p. 262; Studenetskaya, *Odezhda*, pp. 16–40, 258–60.

[70] V. S. Beslaneyev, *Malaya Kabarda* (*XIII--nachalo XX veka*, 2nd revised and enlarged edn, Nalchik, 1995, p. 97.

[71] Bolshaya Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, [1st edn], 65 vols., Moscow, 1926–47, vol. XXX, pp. 409–10; *Entsiklopedicheskiy*

slovar, vol. XIII, p. 781; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 177–8, 209–10.

[72] Beslaneyev, *Malaya Kabarda*, pp. 78–9, 81–3; Evliya Chelebi [Çelebi], *Kniga puteshestviya (izvlecheniya iz sochineniya turetskogo puteshestvennika XVII veka). Perevod i kommentarii*, 3 vols., Moscow, 1961–83, vol. II, *Zemli Severnogo Zakavkaza, Povolzhya i Podonya*, p. 59.

[73] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 201, 203, 206; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 101; Fyodorov, *Istoricheskaya etnografiya*, pp. 100–4; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], p. 109; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 72, 82, 162, 182–5, 188, 209, 211–13, 219, 226, 227, 234, 237, 239, 241–2, 261–5, 289–91, 332, 370, 387; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 90–2, 111–14, 116–22, 183–5, 188–9.

[74] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 206; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXII, p. 263; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], pp. 104, 106–7; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 326–7; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, pp. 261, 263, 265–7; Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 68, 74–5, 97, 101, 133.

[75] See Beslaneyev, *Malaya Kabarda*, maps pp. 56, 97.

[76] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], p. 106; Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 108–9.

[77] A. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, Frankfurt am Main, 1983, pp. 173–4; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. II, p. 23; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 59; vol. XXXVIII, pp. 785–6; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 180.

[78] Kobychev, *Poseleniye*; V. I. Markovin, ‘Pamyatniki zodchestva v gornoy Chechne (po materialam issledovaniy 1957–1965 gg.)’, in Markovin, ed., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 184–271.

[79] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXXVII, pp. 148–9; N. M. Kalashnikova and G. A. Pluzhnikova, *National Costumes of the Soviet Peoples*, Moscow, 1990, pp. 184, 192; W. Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union*, London, 1961, p. 102; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, pp. 282–3.

[80] Adzhiyev, ‘I snova Kumyk o kumykakh’, pp. 90–1; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. II, p. 22; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 781; vol. XXV, pp. 876–7; vol. XXIX, pp. 69–70; vol. XXXVII, pp. 148–9; vol. XXXVIII, p. 581; A. F. L. M. Haxthausen-Abbenburg, *Transcaucasia: Sketches of the Nations and Races between the Black Sea and the Caspian*, translated from German by J. E. Taylor, London, 1854, pp. 211–12; D. M. Lang, *The Armenians: a People in Exile*, London, 1981, p. 57; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 177, 209–10, 432–3, 451, 469, 499, 513; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 169, 185; Suny, *Making*, pp. 18–19, 22, 42–4, 46–7, 65.

[81] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, pp. 22–4; Suny, *Making*, pp. 45–7.

[82] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 28, 85–91.

[83] *Ibid*., p. 21.

[84] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 272–3; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 142–4, 146, 150, 303.

[85] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 135–6, 267–8, 288–94; I. Bellér-Hann, 'Myth and history on the eastern Black Sea coast [the Lazi]', *Central Asian Survey*, 1995, 14, 4, pp. 487–508.

[86] E. Akhaltaksi, 'Report from Georgia: on the Meskhetians', *Nationalities Papers*, 1996, 24, 2, pp. 303–5; Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 288–9, 291–5, 300, 305; Evliya Chelebi, *Kniga puteshestviya*, vol. III, *Zemli Zakavkazya i sopredelnykh oblastey Maloy Azii i Irana*, pp. 184–6, 317–19, n. 23, 35, 41, 42; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. XIX, pp. 152–3.

[87] See Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 131–80, 196–205; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 67–8.

[88] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, pp. 24–5.

[89] B. Z. Pliyev, 'Iz istorii Yuzhnoy Osetii', in B. V. Tekhov, ed., *Yuzhnaya Osetiya v period stroitelstva sotsializma* (*k 60-letiyu ustanovleniya Sovetskoy vlasti v Gruzii*), Tbilisi, 1981, p. 6; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, p. 261.

[90] In Georgian the suffix -*ebi* denotes the plural: *tavadi* 'lord' – *tavadebi* 'lords'; *sakhli* 'house' – *sakhlebi* 'houses'.

[91] Suny, *Making*, pp. 12, 22, 42–4, 46–7. For a comprehensive account of the ranks of Georgian aristocracy, running to forty-four pages, see Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 221–30, 237–49, 257–62.

[92] Allen, ed., *Russian Embassies*, vol. II, p. 546.

[93] Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 49–52.

[94] *Ibid*., pp. 52–4.

[95] *Ibid*., p. 55.

[96] *Ibid*., pp. 56–8, 303.

[97] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 166–8, 170; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 49–51, 55–6, 60–1, 317.

[98] Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 66–7, 152–7, 304–5.

[99] N. G. Volkova, 'Voprosy dvuyazychiya na Severnom Kavkaze', *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1967, no. 1, pp. 27–33. The widespread adoption of Turkic languages for inter-ethnic communication reflects the relative regularity and clarity of their grammatical structure, although this was obscured by the use of Arabic/Persian script.

7 The Caucasus and the Russians

Black Sea approaches: Cossacks and Crimean Tatars

After the Russians' conquest of Astrakhan in 1556 their probing into the Azov–Caspian steppe against the Crimean Tatars and Turks brought them ever nearer to the Caucasus. Control of the Volga opened the way to colonization of the steppe, initiated informally by Cossacks – 'a military-agricultural community of free settlers on the outskirts of the state'.[1] Those who first congregated in the Dnepr steppe south of Kiev in the fifteenth century are celebrated as the leaders of the Ukrainian people in their fight against Polish and Russian domination, but they first gained renown through their exploits against the Crimean Tatars. In the first half of the fifteenth century the first khan of Crimea, Hajji-Giray of the Golden Horde, founded a dynasty which lasted for 400 years. Commanding the approaches to the northern shores of the Black Sea, and connected to the mainland by an isthmus only five miles wide, Crimea was almost impregnable. From the dry steppe in the north of the peninsula, which provides good pasture for sheep and horses, the land rises southward to a range of mountains whose steep southern escarpment enjoys a Mediterranean climate supporting vineyards and citrus, fig and olive groves. Its eastern point overlooks the Kerch Strait linking the Black Sea with the Azov Sea and the mouth of the Don, and here a route from Russia leads to Taman and thence to the Caucasus.

Crimea attracted traders from the Mediterranean world, and early Greek colonies, including the port of Theodosia, remained part of the Byzantine Empire until the thirteenth century AD, when they were seized by Italians from Genoa. The Golden Horde Tatars who overran the peninsula in 1239 permitted the Genoese to retain its seaports, and Theodosia, renamed Kaffa, became a thriving commercial centre.[2] However, the Ottoman Turks' westward advance through Asia Minor, culminating in their occupation of Constantinople in 1453, led to the storming of Kaffa and other Genoese colonies by Mehemmed II, assisted by Mengli Giray of Crimea, in 1475. Khan Ahmad of the Great Horde then invaded Crimea from the Don steppe, and Mengli Giray had to recompense the sultan for restoring his throne by becoming Mehemmed's vassal, with the obligation of providing warriors for Turkey's campaigns. The north of Crimea, along with the steppe from the Don to the Dnestr, became the Crimean khan's domain, while the south coast was incorporated directly into the Ottoman Empire under Turkish governors.[3]

Within the khanate the Tatars gradually abandoned nomadism and became grain and fruit farmers, as well as grazing sheep and cattle. Their settlements included Kyrym ('Crimea'), Ak Mesjid ('White Mosque'), Kara-su-bazar ('Blackwater Market') and Baghchesaray ('Garden Palace') which was the khan's residence. In the northern steppe beyond the isthmus, however, the nomadic Tatars of the Nogay Horde remained nomadic, roaming eastward to the Irtysh, and participating in the conflicts among the khanates into which the Golden Horde disintegrated. As Moscow's conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan led to further division among the Nogays, their western group becoming nominally subject to the Crimean khan.[4] However, the power of the

Giray khans depended on the support of the beys of nomadic clans, and was limited by the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan, whose right to appoint and dismiss khans was enforced by a bodyguard of janissaries, who also ensured his loyalty. By the seventeenth century the khan was in fact usually a puppet of Istanbul. The Crimeans provided the Turks with one essential commodity – slaves, girls and boys (the latter destined to become janissaries) brought in by raiding neighbouring Christian countries, from the Balkans to the Caucasus.[5]

Meanwhile on the Dnepr, Ukrainian peasants living beyond the Crimean steppe were in constant danger from Tatar raids, and for safety combined into bands under chiefs (atamans). Eventually these first Ukrainian Cossacks moved from defensive to aggressive action, attacking Tatars and the Turkish fortresses on the Black Sea coast.[6] While such freelance operations irritated the Lithuanian and Polish authorities by evoking protests from the sultan, they also suggested the idea of using Cossacks as frontier troops. In the 1540s an official Cossack regiment was organized and a base established on an island at the great bend of the lower Dnepr, where rocky outcrops stretched for 50 miles, forming ‘thresholds’ (Ukrainian *porohy*, singular *porih*; Russian *porog*) of turbulent rapids. Thereafter the Ukrainian Cossacks separated into two groups: those who acknowledged the authority of the Polish–Lithuanian *hetman* and those who did not. The officially ‘registered’ Cossacks formed only a small percentage of the Cossack population; the rest were officially ‘rebels’, who refused to return to their villages and the yoke of serfdom. The ranks of these unregistered, free Cossacks constantly increased. Practically outlaws, they established their own base below the rapids, where the Dnepr spread out in a maze of channels, islands and tall reeds. Within this stockaded settlement, known in Ukrainian as the *Sich* (‘clearing’) in ‘the land beyond the rapids’ – Zaporozhya – the Cossacks had an ataman, elected by vocal acclaim of the whole community, who wielded absolute power over the *Sich* – although in practice he could be dismissed, and even killed, if his decisions displeased his unruly followers.[7] In the seventeenth century Zaporozhyan Cossack exploits reached epic proportions as thousands who had participated in Muscovy's Time of Troubles as mercenaries returned to Ukraine ready for new exploits. In light ships carrying small cannon they defied the great Turkish galleys, or sailed out to attack towns, not only near the Dnepr, but sometimes 500 miles across the Black Sea to raid Trebizond, or even Istanbul itself.[8]

Later the Zaporozhyans sometimes allied themselves with their old enemies, the Crimeans, as the latter defied the sultan and asserted their independence. Khan Mehmed Giray III (1623–7) was frequently joined by Cossacks in campaigns against the Turks, and their combined forces won several battles and besieged Kaffa. Similarly the reign of Inayet Giray (1629–37) ended in a rebellion during which the Cossacks assisted the Crimeans.[9]

By then, on the Don and Volga bands of Russian fugitives from Muscovy had also gathered in the steppe and became unofficial Cossack frontiersmen, holding the Turkic nomads at bay. The essence of Cossack life was escape to a life free from the coercion of any government. Living on land beyond the border (*ukraina*), the Cossacks constantly withdrew from the encroaching state, enjoying self-government and the undisciplined egalitarianism of their communities. At their general meetings – in Russian *krug* ‘circle’ and in Ukrainian *rada* ‘council’ – discussion of important matters always had to arrive at a unanimous decision, according to ‘the law of whoever shouts loudest', and frequently ended in violence.[10] Although fiercely patriotic as Ukrainians or Russians and as Orthodox Christians, the Cossacks were not a nation in the normal sense. Rebels against increasing serfdom in Russia, Lithuania and Poland, they welcomed men of various ethnic origins, including an admixture from the Turkic peoples of the steppe. As their communities consisted of men, they got their women, by abduction if necessary, from the native inhabitants of whichever frontier lands they occupied.[11]

Some Russian Cossack communities developed after the destruction of the Kazan Tatar Khanate (1552) as Moscow strengthened its extended southern borders against Crimean and Nogay raids with defence lines of abatis woodland and fortified towns with state Cossack garrisons, extending from the Dnepr to Simbirsk on the Volga. Beyond these lines free Cossacks ranged the open plain, living by hunting, fishing and bee-keeping, but despising farming because wherever cultivation started it led to obligatory labour on landlords' estates, and eventually serfdom.[12] Thus here, too, free Cossacks advanced farther into the steppe to avoid state encroachment. By the end of the sixteenth century bands of Cossacks had migrated far beyond the Don into North Caucasus and established a base on the Terek.[13]

During the chaotic interregnum in Moscow between the death of Tsar Boris Godunov (1605) and the election of Mikhail Romanov (1613) various pretenders to the throne were supported by insurgent Cossack bands. One such revolt was led by Ivan Bolotnikov, a serf's son who absconded to the Cossack frontier and was captured by Crimean Tatars. After several years as a slave at the oars of Turkish galleys, he was set free by Venetians and went to Poland, where he led an abortive revolt in support of a

Russian pretender. Later, Terek Cossacks supported another claimant, ‘Prince Peter’, whose rebellion also failed (both pretenders were executed).[14]

The independent Don Cossacks also launched campaigns against the Turks, sometimes embarrassing the Moscow government when it desired peace with Turkey. In the sixteenth century the Turks built the fortress of Azak near the mouth of the Don, on the eastern border of the Crimean Khanate, to control their Tatar vassals and guard the approaches to the Caucasus. As its garrison also prevented Cossack boats from sailing down-river to the Azov Sea, in 1637 the Don Cossacks besieged and captured Azak and offered it to Tsar Mikhail. However, he would not risk the consequences of annexing it, and the Cossacks had to relinquish their conquest.[15]

Cossack unrest and rebellion against the Muscovite state continued throughout the seventeenth century. A particularly violent revolt flared up in 1670 on the Don, where social stratification had developed as the older-established Cossacks became entrenched in their privileges, while new fugitives from oppression now formed a lower class of hired labourers. Their only alternative was freelance plundering of the caravans of Persian, Turkish or Muscovite merchants travelling to and from Central Asia across the steppe or along the Volga–Don waterway. In the 1660s these Cossack ‘riff-raff’ found a leader in Stepan Razin who, after years of piracy on the Volga and Caspian, including raids on the Persian coast, returned to the Don with great honour. In 1670, with massive support from poor Cossacks, Razin started raiding Russian towns on the Volga in a large-scale insurrection which, however, lacked organization, and soon collapsed under the attacks of Tsar Aleksey's army.[16]

The North Caucasus steppe: early Russian contacts

As we have seen, Russian probing into the Caucasus was foreshadowed in the tenth century, when ‘Rus’ Norsemen from Kiev crossed the Kerch Strait to Circassia and captured Tmutorakan in the Taman peninsula,[17] and another Kievan prince took his army on a long raiding expedition by way of the Caspian to Shirvan.[18] Thereafter a few sporadic visits are recorded: notably that of the twelfth-century Prince Yuriy of Vladimir-Suzdal, who married Queen Tamar of Georgia but was soon expelled. In the fifteenth century an emissary from the Shirvan-shah came to Moscow, and Ivan III's return mission included the Tver merchant Afanasiy Nikitin, who in 1471–4 travelled via the Caspian Sea and Persia to India, and wrote an interesting account of his experiences.[19] Twenty years later King Aleksandre of Ḳakheti initiated official relations between Georgia and Russia by sending envoys with a message of friendship to Ivan III.[20] Another approach was made by Ḳakheti in 1556, when Ivan IV's army conquered Astrakhan and established the first official Russian fort on the Terek. King Levan welcomed Moscow's invasion by sending an embassy to the tsar asking him to send troops to his kingdom. It is not known how many men Ivan sent, but Levan employed them to man his forts – until ‘Shah Tahmasb became powerful’, when the king, to avoid having Russian troops killed by the Persians on his soil, sent them back north.[21]

Despite the long distances involved in travelling over the expanses separating the Caucasus from eastern Europe or Asia, by the late Middle Ages many well-worn routes had been developed by invading armies, official embassies, trading caravans, and river and sea navigators, so that the geographical features and distances were familiar, at least by hearsay.

Serious Russian encroachment on the Caucasus began in the 1560s with a combination of freelance Cossack colonization and invasion by the state. Campaigns against the Tatars had already advanced Moscow's frontier to Astrakhan and the north shore of the Caspian. As usual, this extension of state power prompted adventurers from the Cossack frontier on the Volga to move out into the open steppe – westward to the lower Don and its tributary the Seversk Donets, or southward towards the Caucasus.[22] The 'Wild Steppe' (*dikoye pole*) – a phrase implying '[the] lawless and dangerous space…[of] a perilous frontier…[and] the untamed nature of its nomadic inhabitants…[– was] subject to the shifting winds of steppe politics'.[23] On this expanse of the Great Eurasian steppe the Nogay and Crimean successors of the Golden Horde held sway, and Russians were not welcome, especially during this period of repeated Crimean expeditions against Moscow (in 1563, 1567, 1571–2, etc.). The ongoing skirmishing, the daunting reputation of the Tatars and the harsh conditions prevailing in the arid North Caucasus steppe (which cost a grandiose Ottoman army two-thirds of its personnel after an abortive campaign against Astrakhan in 1569) made crossing it a hazardous undertaking.[24] Yet many travellers faced it: several embassies from North Caucasus lands – especially Circassian princes from Kabarda – visited Moscow from the 1550s onwards; and the first Russian fort in North Caucasus may have been erected in Kabarda in 1563. Three well-documented official embassies travelled from Moscow to the kings of Georgia in 1589–90, 1596–9 and 1604–5.[25]

Kabarda, the land of the east Circassians, lay to the east of the river Kuban, and was the only large constituent of the Circassian (properly Adyg) peoples which came within Russia's orbit before the nineteenth century. West of the Kuban the other nations speaking Circassian languages were vassals of the Crimean Tatars, therefore subject to the Ottoman Empire. Some Kabardan princes, however, became Russia's allies against the Turks and Crimeans during the sixteenth century, and detachments of Kabardan, west Circassian and Nogay mercenaries fought for Russia in the Livonian (Baltic) War. Moreover, in 1561 Kucheney, the daughter of Prince Kemirgoko (called by the Russians 'Temryuk'), became the second of Ivan the Terrible's six wives, known in Russia as 'Maria Cherkasskaya'. The Russians, after originally calling the Circassians 'Kasogs', later used the name Cherkas(skiy) for both the Circassians (Cherkesses) and the Ukrainian Cossacks. In Ukraine a town called Cherkassy has existed since the fourteenth century, and in 1805, when a new town was established as the centre of Don Cossack Province, it was called Novocherkassk – 'New Cherkas'.[26]

Kabarda was a dominant political and cultural force in North Caucasus. Its nominal ruler, the Chief Prince (Olipsha), was elected from among the most powerful princely families (the *pshchy*) who were frequently at each others' throats or in conflict with their peers in Daghestan. An all-Kabardan conference was held in the 1580s in an attempt to unify Kabarda, but this failed, and fragmentation increased. The *pshchy* princes were the feudal superiors not only of the Kabardan petty gentry (*uork*s) and peasantry, but also of the rulers of neighbouring non-Kabardan peoples: the Balkars, Karachys and Abazas and other mountain peoples, some of the Osetians and, to the east of the upper Terek, in Lesser

Kabarda some of the Ingush and Chechens were their vassals. Thus Kabarda at this time embraced a much greater territory than the twentieth-century Kabarda-Balkar ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic).[27]

Kabarda, as the most powerful principality in north-west Caucasus, was instrumental in halting the advance of the Kalmyks when they irrupted into the Caucasian steppes in the 1680s. Moscow, however, by then assumed its influence over Kabarda and other Circassian peoples to be so strong that the tsars arrogated to their many titles ‘ruler of Kabarda and the Circassian and mountain princes’.[28]

Russian forts and native allegiance

Because of the paucity of contemporary sources, it is unknown when Cossacks first moved into the North Caucasus steppe; which route they followed – overland from the Volga–Don portage or from the lower Don via the Manych and Kuma rivers, or by sea from Astrakhan; where their first settlements were; and whether, as free Cossacks, they preceded state troops sent by Moscow, or followed them.[29] However, it does seem probable that, as Moscow's conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan had increased the Cossacks’ scope for threatening state authority in the ‘Wild Steppe’ too, the capital was concerned almost as much with controlling the Cossacks as with combating the Tatars, so that Muscovite officials followed hard on the heels of Cossacks moving into the steppe or embarking on the Volga.[30]

Although the construction of a fort probably was a spontaneous enterprise, some sources say it was initiated by

Ivan IV at the request of his Kabardan brother-in-law. It was located in Lesser Kabarda, east of the Terek's eastward bend, where Kabardans seeking more pastures and hunting and fishing grounds had moved on to the Sunzha and middle Terek, and those who settled near the Russian fort in the Terek delta were definitely beyond the borders of Kabarda.[31] The first Russian settlers were probably Greben ('Ridge') Cossacks who about 1560 built a fort near the Terek in what is today north-east Chechenia. The 'ridge' of their name may refer to either their place of origin on the Don or Volga, or to the middle Terek landscape of hills and gullies where they settled and raised their first stockade. As the government apparently sent two Russian princes from Astrakhan with 2,000 soldiers and cannons to build it, this casts doubt on the report of its unofficial construction by freelance Cossacks. In any case, in 1572 the tsar conceded to the sultan of Turkey's demand that the Terek fort be abandoned, and withdrew the garrison – but free Volga Cossacks soon took their place. Five years later, when the first Russo-Turkish War began, the official fort was re-established, and Terek forts multiplied thereafter. Half of this nucleus of the Terek Cossack Host were paid and supplied by Moscow; the rest supported themselves by growing millet, maize, grapevines and mulberry trees, keeping sheep and harvesting the abundant fish in the rivers. Somewhat later a band of Don Cossacks founded a third fort amid the marshes of the Terek delta.[32]

Despite Crimean and Ottoman attacks on Astrakhan and Daghestan, by 1580 the Russian Terek community was firmly subordinated to Moscow and formed the nucleus of the Terek Cossack Host, officially charged with policing this new frontier. Because of their close contacts with the Chechens, Kabardans and other Caucasians, the Cossacks adopted the costume, weapons and even customs of their neighbours, and some intermarried with local women. The Greben community were more conservative and more pious, and after the 1654 Schism in the Russian Orthodox Church their settlements became a haven for persecuted Russian Old Believers.[33]

The Cossack settlements quickly attracted some Osetians, Georgians and Armenians, but to the Crimean Tatars and Ottomans the presence of Russians in the Caucasus was undesirable. Nor were they acceptable to the rulers of Daghestan, who in 1560 had suffered a Russian raid on Tarki, the seat of the *shamkhal* of Ghazikumukh.[34] Consequently, Russian advances in this direction were blocked in 1605 by a combined force of Daghestanis, Chechens, Kabardans and Turks, and Russian forts were destroyed. A century later a defence line against the Turks and Crimeans was built on the lower Terek, incorporating the forts founded by the Greben Cossacks, who thus became subordinated to the governor of Astrakhan as servants of the Russian state; and in 1722 the Terek Host was moved farther south towards Daghestan and the new fort of the Holy Cross was erected near the lower Sulak.[35]

Russian communist historians asserted that the Caucasian peoples were delighted when Russians appeared on their borders, and flocked to offer their submission to the tsar.[36] Indeed there were many occasions when individual North Caucasian rulers, threatened by Turkey or Persia, did perceive advantage in swearing fealty to Moscow – but since they just as readily forswore this when circumstances changed, it is untrue to say that ‘Kabarda became part of Russia’ in 1557 or that nearly all of Daghestan had ‘submitted peacefully to Russian rule’ by 1635. The extraction of agreements to become the tsar's subjects and serve him in perpetuity and the swearing of temporary and tactical oaths of allegiance by native peoples whose resistance had been crushed were standard practice wherever Russia subjugated new colonies to its empire.[37] Caucasian leaders' expressions of eagerness to 'fulfil tribute payments to the Tsar and rally for military service under his voyevodas', and indeed to become his subjects or 'slaves' (*kholopy*), are common in diplomatic correspondence between Moscow and the Circassian princes or the Georgian king Alexandre (whose defence against the Kumuks of Tarki the Russians undertook rather prematurely) but they could not be taken literally when 'it was clear that in the late sixteenth century Muscovy was not yet capable of maintaining such distant possessions'.[38]

The role of such oaths as rituals of diplomatic relations is demonstrated in a study of Russia's expansion into the steppes, and its attitudes toward the peoples encountered there. This shows that, although Moscow's pretension to supreme authority might be offensive to leaders of the steppe and mountain peoples, such as the Nogays, it was not essential to take it literally or accede to it sincerely. For the sake of smooth relations, oaths of allegiance incorporating subservient, flattering phrases could be adopted tongue-in-cheek – by the Russians as well as by neighbours whom they chose to see as inferiors and barbarians. 'Easily extracted, albeit not easily enforced, such oaths were understood differently on both sides.'[39] This is particularly relevant to present-day Russian claims about their relations with peoples of the Caucasus. In the case of the Crimean Tatars, the mutuality of Russian and Crimean assumptions of superiority reflected an unresolved conflict between equallymatched opponents: Russia – typical of 'theocratic states and empires in which religious and political doctrines were fused in a single concept of "manifest destiny"' – showed an increasing assumption of 'superior political status vis-à-vis its many neighbours', including the Crimeans; the latter, however, 'continued to regard the [Russian] princes as their subjects and demanded to be addressed as khans, that is, superior rulers'.[40] Another convention was that the assumptive superior power encouraged submission and loyalty by making 'presents' or regular 'allowances' (*zhalovaniya*) to his vassals, in an apparent reversal of the usual tribute payments (*yasak*). 'The regular supply of such payments and presents to the local ruler was, in fact, the only way to secure the natives' cooperation…Moscow had to provide an uninterrupted flow of payments to the nomadic rulers in hopes of enlisting their military support, or at least ensuring their neutrality.'[41]

Not only nomadic peoples were involved in this mercenary 'bidding war' against the Ottoman Empire and Persia: the Russians were also competing for the support of Circassians, Kumuks and others. However, during seven decades of the twentieth century continuous misrepresentation of such situations by historians subservient to Russia's Communist Party persuaded many people to believe that Kabarda had become a part of Russia in the sixteenth century – a 'fact' which was celebrated pompously in 1957 and officially (and naively) repeated innumerable times thereafter.[42] Previously the date generally accepted in Russia for the Kabardans' becoming Russia's subjects had been 1774 (the Turco-Russian Treaty of Küchük Kainarji), and the historical fiction of their 'belonging to Russia' since 1557 was never mentioned in any context before 1957.[43] Early in the eighteenth century Kabardan and Georgian nobles in Russian service, such as Princes Alexander Bekovich-Cherkasskiy and Otar Tumanov, explained to Peter I that the Kabardans were 'independent and submitted to no one' and that the peoples of North

Caucasus in general were ‘Russian subjects more in name than in fact’. The Russian government, however, made its attitude to this brutally clear: ‘When in 1779 the nobles of Greater Kabarda refused to swear allegiance to Russia and declared that they had traditionally been under Russian protectorship as guests or allies (*kunak*s) but not subjects, Russian troops marched into Kabarda, forcing the Kabardinians to pledge unconditional allegiance.’[44]

Georgia in the seventeenth century

By the beginning of the seventeenth century Georgia was in the grip of a combination of interlinked problems which seemed likely to destroy it completely. The Bagratid dynasty's biological dilemma was the absence of male heirs in one line after another. This problem was exacerbated by chronic internal strife between various branches of the family, as well as ambitious and unscrupulous power-seekers among the nobility. One cause of this uncontrolled violence was (as it was in Russia) Georgia's isolation from concepts of good government, social morality and citizenship which were beginning to emerge from rational philosophical and scientific developments in western Europe. The country's worst problem of all, however, was interference and subjugation by its most powerful Asian neighbours – shahs of Persia and sultans of Turkey – who acted not only to their own subjects, but also towards their smaller neighbours, Georgia and what remained of Armenia, according to norms of the Dark Ages. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the dire problem of their predatory imperialism was further complicated by the involvement of Russia.

Although the principalities of western Georgia were under strong pressure from the Ottoman sultans from the beginning of the sixteenth century, their troubles mostly came as much from each other as from the Turks. For instance, in 1623 King Giorgi of Imereti, worried by the alliance between the ruthless Dadiani Levan of Megrelia and Prince Kaikhosro of Guria, challenged them and was defeated in battle. It had never been the practice among Georgian rulers to capture fellow Georgians, whether nobles or commoners, with the express purpose of selling them into slavery, but in the corrupting period of Turkish domination they began to do this: ‘open slave-trading became widespread, for even warriors secretly sold prisoners to the Tatars. Such raids became frequent, to the dishonour of Imereti.’[45] Even the highest in the land became involved:

> [In about 1638] King Giorgi…took a few of his men to reconnoitre the Dadiani's army before the battle, but Dadiani Levan suspected this and sent out warriors to waylay the king. They captured him and delivered him to Levan, who…imprisoned him in his castle in Odishi…When Giorgi's son Aleksandre requested his father's release, Levan demanded as the king's ransom the Armenian and Jewish merchants of Chikhori and Chkhari. Aleksandre, seeing no alternative, handed them over and retrieved his father…[who] grieved so deeply over what had happened…that he died…and…Aleksandre became king…But Levan Dadiani was incorrigible, and continued to raid Imereti every year at Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and other festivals.[46]

In one encounter with Megrelian raiders King Aleksandre's son and sole heir, Mamuka, was captured and imprisoned by Levan. It was then that Aleksandre of Imereti, despairing of getting Levan Dadiani to live at peace with his neighbours, and lacking the wealth to ransom his son, decided to appeal to the Russian tsar: in 1648 an embassy led by Khosia Japaridze made the long journey to Moscow and was welcomed by Aleksey, who responded by sending back to Kutaisi two boyars ‘with gifts of sable furs and much money’. This increased the Dadiani's envy; he had Mamuka blinded, and his own death soon after led to further violence in Imereti and Megrelia.[47]

Both the Georgians and the Armenians, living under constant threat of attack by Persia or Turkey, hoped that they might receive Russian protection. The earliest diplomatic approach had come from Kakheti in the late fifteenth century, and appeals to Moscow were renewed on many occasions during the next 200 years by rulers of various Georgian principalities. Russian governments were circumspect in relation to Persia, but, as the Georgians, like the Russians, belonged to the Orthodox Church, Moscow made suitable gestures towards them. In 1638 the ruler of Megrelia, Levan (Dadiani), was taken under nominal Russian protection, as was King Aleksandre of Imereti in 1650.[48] These developments in western Georgia were part of the general decline and disintegration everywhere in Georgia,

> as the principle of loyal service and allegiance to the sovereign gave way to an anarchical pattern of provincial separatism…referred to in Georgian as *t'avadoba*, or the rule of [local] princes. With this went a deterioration in the relations between lord and peasant, to the detriment of the latter's rights and privileges. A national rebirth was prevented by the country's division into Turkish and Persian spheres of influence. The Turks looked on Western Georgia merely as a source of slaves and booty, and did their

> best to keep the land internally divided and demoralized.[49]

Conditions were no better in the east, under Shah ᶜAbbas and his successors. Although several Georgian kings became nominal Muslims, adopted Persian names and enjoyed high favour at the shah's court, they were in reality his slaves, and could bring no relief to their country, which languished practically under Persian occupation for 150 years. As many Georgians in their service discovered, Persian rulers were corrupt, superstitious and ruthless; nevertheless an English historian of Persia cheerfully calls ᶜAbbas ‘the Great’, mainly because of his military success against the Turks. He also praises the shah's ‘breadth of outlook’ in not treating the 5,000 Armenian families he evicted from their homes in Julfa on the Araxes as slaves, but merely deporting them 600 miles to Isfahan where they ‘prospered’ as skilled craftsmen and traders, and the shah had a church built for them in ‘New Julfa’. However, ‘An attempt…to establish a second colony in Mazandaran…proved a complete failure in consequence of the malarious climate, which killed off the Armenians by hundreds.’[50]

Symptomatic of Persian ways in the seventeenth century was ᶜAbbas I's successor, Safi I (1629–42), who was born to a Circassian concubine in the royal harem, where, according to a practice introduced by ᶜAbbas I,[51] he had been well-nigh incarcerated since birth. The experience gained in the company of indulgent females and the eunuchs who guarded them apparently did not engender compassion, but rather reinforced a proclivity towards cruelty. One member of the royal household instrumental in procuring the elevation of ᶜAbbas I's grandson, Sam Mirza, to the Persian throne as Shah Safi I was ‘an illegitimate scion of the Kartlian royal family’, Khusrau-Mirza. For faithful service he was renamed ‘Rustam Khan’, and in 1632 appointed as the shah's viceroy in Tiflis, where the Georgians called him King Rosṭom.[52]

Thereafter King Teimuraz I of Ḳakheti was continually menaced by Rosṭom and Salim-khan, the shah's puppet ruler in Ḳakheti, but having regained the Ḳakheti throne for the second time in 1634 Teimuraz ‘maintained himself more or less precariously in the hills from which he used to sally forth and inflict reverses on Rostom and his Persian auxiliaries’.[53] One of his endeavours was an attempt to convert the pagan Dido people – Ḳakheti's neighbours in the mountains of Daghestan – to Christianity, in order to open up another route to Russia. However, the Didos and other Daghestanis resisted and forced Teimuraz to withdraw. His next initiative was to send his grandson, Nikolaoz (the future king Ereḳle I of Kartli), to Moscow in 1648 to seek favour with Tsar Aleksey, and Nikolaoz remained there until 1662. Teimuraz was present in Kutaisi at the time of a visit by Russian envoys’ in 1650, and six years later he too travelled to Moscow, where he received a warm welcome but no aid.[54] After his return to Georgia Teimuraz was ousted in 1663 by King Vakhtang V/Shah-Navaz of Kartli, who set his own son Archil on the Ḳakheti throne and sent Teimuraz to a monastery in Persia, where he soon died. Meanwhile Nikolaoz/Ereḳle returned from Russia and attempted to establish himself in Ḳakheti, but was so hounded by Vakhtang V that in 1664 he again fled to Moscow, where he gained high favour at court and stayed for the next 24 years.[55]

During the seventeenth century Ḳakheti underwent two long interregnums without a Georgian ruler (1648–64 and

1675–1703) when it was ruled by Persian governors.[56] Kartli also passed through dynastic complications caused by the failure of the direct Bagrationi line to provide a successor to King Rosṭom, so that it was necessary to find one not in the direct line. Rosṭom, childless and aged 88, had designated a cousin as his heir, but he died in 1653 while hunting. ^{c}Abbas II now permitted Rosṭom to adopt as his successor a junior Bagratid prince, who became Vakhtang V or, in Persian, Shah-Navaz, meaning ‘Well-beloved’. Because Vakhtang came from a branch of Georgia's ruling family whose seat was at Mukhrani on the river Ksani, he and his successors, who were appointed by the shah, have been called ‘the Mukhranian dynasty’.[57]

Until the 1720s the Christian countries of South Caucasus, ethnically complex and much divided, and ever exposed to the threat of Turkish or Persian invasions, formed a rather self-contained world, in which outsiders, such as the Russian Cossacks in the Terek steppe, played no significant role, as yet. This situation was about to change – and with it the whole way of life of the Caucasian peoples and the relationships existing between them – as the Russian Empire stood poised to add the Caucasus to its imperial possessions.

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[4] Fisher, *Russian Annexation*, p. 12; Kochekayev, Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya, pp. 100–1, 107–12, 115–20; Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism*, pp. 13–14.

[5] Fisher, *Russian Annexation*, pp. 11, 14–18; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. V, p. 138; Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism*, pp. 14–17.

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[13] Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. II, pp. 255–66.

[14] *Ibid*., vol. II, pp. 250, 255–66.

[15] Fisher, *Russian Annexation*, p. 14; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 83–9; S.F. Platonov, *Sokrashchennyy kurs russkoy istorii dlya sredney shkoly*, Petrograd, 1915, pp. 192–3.

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[18] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. IV, pp. 346–7; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 117, 147–8. This chronicle story was used 1,000 years later by the Communist Party (assuming the Kievan princes to be East Slavs) to justify Russia's nineteenth-century invasion of the Caucasus as aid generously given to its peoples against foreign enemies: L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities*, Chapel Hill, 1969, pp. 308–13.

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[28] Botsvadze, *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza*, pp. 20–4; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 315–20, 334–40; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 80–1; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 234, 258–262.

[29] *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 328–9; Zasedateleva, *Terskiye kazaki*, pp. 182–7.

[30] Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo terrora*, p. 93.

[31] Beslaneyev, *Malaya Kabarda*, pp. 9–19, map p. 56; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 780; *Istoriya Kabardy*,

p. 33, map between pp. 34 and 35; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 242, 297, 331, 349.

[32] Zasedateleva, *Terskiye kazaki*, pp. 183–6, 191–4.

[33] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. IX, pp. 585–6; vol. XV, p. 588; vol. XVII, p. 705; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 330; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 23, 48, 90; Zasedateleva, *Terskiye kazaki*, pp. 182–96. The last-named, more recent book casts little more light on the origins of the Caucasian Cossacks than the *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. IX, pp. 585–6; vol. XXXIII, pp. 86–7.

[34] For *shamkhal/shevkal* and other titles of Daghestani rulers, see Allen, ed., *Russian Embassies*, pp. 39–40 n. 2.

[35] Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov*, pp. 281–2; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXXIII, pp. 86–7; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 270, 283–9; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 249, 328–31, 341; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 81–2.

[36] The fiction of Russian ‘help’ to native peoples and the ‘voluntary submission’ of the latter was particularly rife in works published during and after the Brezhnev period, e.g. *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 330, 346–7; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 80–2.

[37] Botsvadze, *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza*, p. 15; J. Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony 1581–1990*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 26, 28, 41, 98–9;

Istoriya Kabardy, p. 38; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 345.

[38] S. M. Solovyov, *Istoriya Rossii s drevneyshikh vremyon*, 15 vols., St Petersburg, 1851–79, reprinted Moscow, 1962–6, vol. IV, pp. 267, 277–9; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, p. 283.

[39] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, pp. 2, 52–3.

[40] *Ibid*., pp. 51–2.

[41] *Ibid*., pp. 63, 66–7.

[42] The first retrospective announcement of Kabarda's ‘voluntary joining’ with Russia in 1557 was made in the Kabardan ASSR's capital, Nalchik, in 1955: see Namitok, ‘“Voluntary” adherence’. Subsequent confirmative references include: *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 37–8; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, p. 643; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 331–3, with five occurrences of ‘voluntary adherence of Kabarda’ on p. 333 alone, while the volume's ‘Introduction’ repeats the phrase ‘voluntary entry of the peoples of North Caucasus into Russia’ nine times on p. 9 alone.

[43] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. XIII, p. 781; *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. XXX, 1937, col. 410; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1954–5, vol. II, p. 4. No such event as Russia's absorption of Kabarda in 1557 is mentioned in any Soviet Russian history before 1957: Traho, *Cherkesy*, pp. 24–26.

[44] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, pp. 55–6; and further telling examples on pp. 58, 68–9.

[45] Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, p. 245.

[46] *Ibid*., pp. 244–6.

[47] *Ibid*., pp. 247–8.

[48] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 15, 22.

[49] *Ibid*., pp. 17–18.

[50] P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, 2nd edn, 2 vols., London, 1921, p. 181.

[51] Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, p. 278.

[52] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 12–13; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 304, 307, 310; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, p. 63.

[53] Lang, *Last Years*, p. 13; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 65–8, 150–2.

[54] Lang, *Last Years*, p. 89; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 65–8, 153–6, 247–8, 304–5.

[55] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 88–9; Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 154, 157–8, 250–1.

[56] Lang, *Last Years*, p. 286.

[57] As they were appointed by the shahs of Persia they are sometimes called ‘the Mukhranian viceroys’: Lang, *Last Years*, *passim*, and Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 174–80. ‘Mukhranian’ does not signify any special difference between these and many previous Bagratid rulers, except as a source of rival claimants when the reigning dynasty lacked an obvious successor to the Kartlian or other throne.

8 Caucasia in the eighteenth century

Russia's Peter I and the Caucasus

Much in South Caucasus depended on the condition of Persia, where in the reign of the pious Shah Sultan Husayn (1694–1722)

> The decline in royal power, the indifference of the shah with regard to the affairs of state, his lack of initiative, energy and consistency ruled out all possibility of progress…whether…[in] commerce, administration or agriculture, the national finances or the army…Nevertheless, the institutions of state continued to function, even if ominous signs of ossification…became noticeable, for example, in the military sphere.[1]

This situation contrasts greatly with the contemporary dynamism in Russia generated by Peter the Great. His Persian expedition was not an isolated incident, but an episode typical of the history of eighteenth-century Eurasian warfare, in which Peter was one of the major actor-autocrats indulging his taste for bloody events and causing repercussions from Vienna to Afghanistan:

> of the thirty-five years of his rule…only [in one,] 1724 [,] was…Russia…at peace…The…immediate motives behind Peter's reckless military enterprises, so far as they can be discerned at all, are not easily reconcilable with the heroic and noble visions of his apologists…

> [The inescapable] conclusion…[is that] the wars that filled the reign of Peter were largely of his own making, that they were embarked upon without any realization of what they actually meant, and without any definite and clear object in view.[2]

Peter had attained sole power in Moscow in 1689 at the age of seventeen, after seven years under the regency of his half-sister, Sofiya, during which the power of the throne was continually challenged by her supporters, including the hereditary royal regiment, the *streltsy*. Much influence was also wielded by Sofiya's lover, Prince Vasiliy Golitsyn, who as a soldier was hampered by the archaic organization of the Russian army. It was this incompetence, and the violence of another *streltsy* uprising fomented by Golitsyn with the aim of making Sofiya the sovereign, that induced the 17-year-old prince Peter and his supporters to stage a counter-coup by which he became 'Caesar-Autocrat' of All Russia.

In the 1490s Pope Alexander VI had advocated a crusade against the Ottoman Empire, and the idea was revived after the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683.[3] None of Russia's earlier rulers had subscribed to this concept – no doubt because of their Orthodox Church's exclusive doctrine of 'Moscow the Third Rome' – but now the Russians' geographical situation fixed their attention on the Crimean Tatars and Turks who blocked farther advance to the south, and Peter I was particularly tempted by this second front, notwithstanding its repercussions in Moldavia, Ukraine, the Volga steppes and Persia.

The North Caucasus plain beyond the lower Don and Volga had been the territory of the Don Cossacks since Moscow's annexation of the Tatar Khanate of Astrakhan in 1556, but the khan of Crimea possessed a strong frontier on the Black Sea, the key fortress of which was Azak (Azov), at the mouth of the Don. This had been the scene of an exploit by the Don Cossacks in 1637 when, on their own initiative, they captured Azov and offered it to Tsar Mikhail. Muscovy's Assembly of the Land, however, rejected the Cossacks' offer and, apologizing to the sultan, obliged the Cossacks to demolish it and withdraw. Nearly 60 years later Moscow's conquest of Azov seemed a strategic necessity, and two unsuccessful campaigns by Golitsyn were redeemed by the young Peter, with an army partly modernized in accordance with Peter's own conceptions, but still encumbered with Muscovy's traditional army, the *streltsy*. The first expedition against Turkey's rebuilt Azov castle in 1695, in which Peter's military role was subordinate, also failed, but the second siege forced its defenders to surrender, at the cost of heavy casualties among the *streltsy*. In 1697 Peter departed on his personal incognito embassy and study tour in western Europe. Once again this produced *streltsy* conspiracies against him in Moscow, and on his return Peter presided over an orgy of torture and executions.[4]

A year later the hyperactive Peter again abandoned his Turkish front and set off on a completely different tack – his 21-year-long 'Northern War' against King Karl XII of Sweden. As Peter led his army into Livonia in August 1700 without the essential planning, it was smashed at Narva on the Gulf of Finland – Peter having fled before the battle began. Fortunately for him, the equally erratic young Swedish victor promptly took his army off to the west, giving Peter the chance to occupy Ingria and found the city of St Petersburg in the Neva delta.[5]

Despite this new interest, the tsar continued to pay attention to the south, ordering the governor of Astrakhan to cultivate friendly relations and trade with the rulers of Daghestan, and consulting the Russian governor of Azov about the North Caucasian peoples’ attitude to becoming Russia's allies. In 1701 he also persuaded the sultan, for the first time, to accept a Russian consul in Istanbul. Meanwhile the Turks strengthened their position in north-west Caucasus by completing a new fortress at Kerch, at the same time persuading the Russians to demolish their fort, burn their Azov fleet and discontinue shipbuilding at Voronezh. For several years, too, the Russians were faced with turmoil in their eastern and southern colonies: another *streltsy* revolt at Astrakhan in 1705, and an uprising of the Bashkorts and other peoples of the southern Urals and middle Volga which coalesced with widespread mutiny among the Don Cossacks in 1707–9.[6]

Relations with the sultan became acute for the two king-adventurers, Peter and Karl XII, as their continuing Northern War, with Hetman Mazepa of the Ukrainian Cossacks playing a double game between them, brought them directly into the orbit of the Ottoman Empire. In 1708 Karl advanced into Ukraine, but instead of making an essential rendezvous with his general, he hurried south to meet Mazepa. Consequently the Swedes were defeated by Peter's army, first in 1708, and again in June 1709 at the battle of Poltava. The two kings’ subsequent escapades eventually had repercussions in the Caucasus. Karl avoided Russian capture by surrendering to the Turks, thereafter being granted sanctuary in Moldavia, while Peter repeatedly demanded that the sultan hand him over to Russia.[7]

After a year during which Karl enjoyed Turkish hospitality, Peter sent Sultan Ahmed III an ultimatum with the choice of removing Karl from Turkey, or war – and the sultan surprised him by declaring the Ottoman Empire at war with Russia. In summer 1711 Peter defiantly led his army into the Turkish-occupied Romanian Danube principalities, and issued a manifesto condemning Turkish perfidy and calling on the Orthodox 'Greeks, Wallachians, Bulgars and Serbs groaning under the yoke of the barbarians' to rise against their overlords. Naturally this offended the Turks, and 'long after, this…[manifesto], like Peter's legendary "Testament", was regarded as proof of his ambition to reconstruct the Byzantine Empire under the dynasty of Romanov'.[8] In any case, Peter's campaign was a disaster, since his headstrong drive into Turkish territory left him isolated on the river Prut, surrounded by Turkish and Crimean troops, and with no supplies. In the circumstances, Sultan Ahmed's acceptance of Peter's capitulation, and the terms he imposed, were generous, since they merely required the Russians to evacuate Azov and other forts, and refrain from interfering in Poland and Ukraine.[9]

From then on, however, the sultan's policy in the Caucasus became more aggressive. He accused the Kabardan princes of treachery and threatened them with war unless they submitted to him, while his vassal the Crimean khan Daulat-Giray sent an emissary to the *shamkhal*, Adil-Giray of Tarki, demanding his submission. At the same time the sultan ordered the Crimeans to harry Kabarda and the Terek Cossacks. Both communities repulsed these attacks, but the Circassians, realizing that they could not face the Turks and Crimeans without help, in 1711 asked to be taken under Russia's protection – which, the tsar assured them, far from entailing taxation, would bring them an annual subsidy.

Peter accordingly sent 9,000 troops to the Kuban, and that summer the Kabardan prince Elmurza Cherkasskiy, one of the tsar's closest collaborators, participated at the head of a Circassian detachment in the defeat of the Crimean army. The sultan accused the Circassians of treachery and offered them annexation or destruction, and by autumn he was poised to invade North Caucasus, with the ultimate aim of subjugating Georgia and Azerbaijan.[10]

Meanwhile, Peter was seduced by more distant prizes: news of the Dutch and English East India Companies' operations in south-east Asia caused Peter I to covet the resources of Persia and India – establishing a theme in Russian imperial thinking which would persist for many years to come. Following the end of his long Northern War against Sweden in 1721, the tsar was ready to seek access to India, using the Caspian Sea and Persia as his gateway. Several early incursions into the Caucasus by Swedish princes of Kievan Rus had been made by ship, and more recently Cossack pirates from the Volga had sailed along the Caspian shores in quest of plunder – the most notorious expedition being that of Stepan Razin in 1668–9, which raided the Persian coast from Darband to Rasht, and returned to Astrakhan with its booty.[11]

An essential preliminary to gaining a foothold on the Caspian coast was the preparation of charts. Peter the Great's cartographers, based in Astrakhan, followed Dutch nautical practice, and much of the great inland sea was well charted by 1715, under the supervision of the Kabardan Prince Bekovich.[12] This intensive activity seems not to have alerted the Persians to the imminence of an attack.[13] The tsar realized that, as Persia declined under the later Safavids, Turkey was poised to conquer Persia's Caucasian possessions if Russia did not. Thus serious Russian intrusion into the Caucasus began in May 1722, when Peter in person led a long-range adventure to seize Persian territory on the Caspian, on the pretext of damage suffered by Russian merchants in Shamakha during a raid on the city by anti-Shi^{c}ah Daghestanis.[14]

Persia's political and economic influence in neighbouring lands had declined since the rise of the Ottoman Empire, and decades of warfare against the Turks had drained the Safavids' resources. Life in central Persia had also been disrupted by invasions by Afghans and other rebels, and the shahs who succeeded ^{c}Abbas I were incompetent, due to their boyhood sequestration in the harem and total lack of practical training.[15] Consequently, the Russians justified their invasion of Daghestan and the Caspian coast by implying that Persia's suzerainty over it had lapsed. Peter I's letter of 25 July 1722 to the shah, conveyed by Russia's envoy in Persia, acknowledged Persia's sovereignty over Daghestan, but his spurious excuses for the Russian expedition to the Caspian which was already under way were ominous:

> Explain to the Shah…that we are going to Shamakha not to attack Persia, but to extirpate the rebels who have given us offence. And that if…[the Persians] in their ruinous state need assistance, we are ready to help them rid themselves of all their enemies and re-establish Persia's possessions in perpetuity, if they will in exchange cede to us certain provinces along the Caspian coast, since we know that if they remain in this insecurity and do not accept our proposal, the Turks will not fail to take possession of the whole of Persia…and we do not wish either them or ourselves to possess it. Nevertheless, as we have not come to

> any understanding with [the Persians] we cannot take their side in this, but we shall take the coastal region into our possession because we cannot allow it to fall into Turkish hands…Further explain that if they do not accept this, what good will it do them [because] when the Turks invade Persia it will become essential for us to take possession of the Caspian shores…and so by grudging a part…[the Persians] will lose the whole country.[16]

Peter prepared for his Caspian offensive by having 47 sailing ships and 400 galleys built at Astrakhan, and set up a field printing press on which were printed many copies of a propagandist 'manifesto' in Arabic script, in the mixture of Kazan Tatar and Chaghatay, with additional Arabic or Persian words, regularly used by Russians for communicating with 'Asiatics'.[17] A Soviet Academy of Sciences history tells us that this leaflet was to inform the local population in advance of the ostensible reason for the invasion – to punish the 'trouble-makers and rebels' who had robbed Russian merchants in Shamakha. In fact, that incident was Peter's pretext for annexing the Caspian's western coast, which was 'of economic and political importance to Russia'. The historian does not say to which country this Daghestani territory belonged at that time (in fact Persia) but he asserts that 'apart from Hajji Dawud, Surkhay Khan and their milieu, Peter's manifesto was warmly welcomed in Daghestan' and that 'news of the Russian campaign caused great alarm in governing circles in Turkey…and the unimpeded advance of Peter's army increased their fury'. Russia's ambassador in Istanbul reported 'great preparations for war'.[18]

The tsar had sent a large army overland from Astrakhan to North Caucasus, while ships from the Volga conveyed him with other troops to an anchorage in Agrakhan gulf north of the Terek, where on 27 July he landed with his main force. Simultaneously his cavalry was riding south across the Nogay steppe, and was joined en route by the princes of Kabarda. The only show of resistance was an attempt made by the Kumuk rulers of Endery, Aydemir and Chapalav, supported by their Chechen subjects, to stop a detachment of Russian cavalry, but they soon desisted. Meanwhile the tsar was welcomed by the *shamkhal* of Tarki and the Ma^{c}sum of Tabasaran, although other Daghestani rulers remained aloof. Indeed the *shamkhal*, Adil-Giray, soon turned against the Russians, and attacked Tarki ten times until 1725, when the Russians captured him and exiled him to Archangel province. On 2 August 1722 Peter's vanguard was joined by 10,000 Don and Ukrainian Cossacks and 5,000 of Khan Ayuka's Kalmyks, so that the tsar amassed some 100,000 men on the Terek.[19] Three days later, Peter led his main force south by land and occupied the coast as far as Darband, before moving on to Baku. Another part of his force embarked on ships and sailed south along the coast (with considerable losses to their fleet), and they established posts along the south Caspian coast from Lenkoran via Rasht, Gilan and Mazandaran to Astarabad – a region which Peter intended to turn into a Russian colony by evicting the Persians and importing Christian settlers from Russia and Armenia.[20] Less than ten years after the Russian invasion, however, Persia showed signs of revival under Shah Tahmasp II, who was first supported, and then deposed, by Persia's victor over the Afghans, the Turkmen general Nadir Quli-Khan. When in 1732 the latter advanced against the Russians they abandoned their precarious hold on the south Caspian coast, and returned Rasht, Baku and Darband to Persia. The Russians retreated northward, demolishing their recently built Holy Cross fort on the Sulak, and halting at Kyzlar on the lower Terek.[21]

The political and economic crisis in Persia had stirred up antagonism towards the Safavid dynasty, especially in Daghestan and Shirvan, where strife between Persia's ruling Shi^{c}ites and the local Sunni population was endemic, and the latter played a considerable part in Daghestani opposition to Peter I's invasion.[22]

The Volga–Ural steppe: Nogays and Kalmyks

Although Turkey, the Crimean Khanate and outlying nomadic tribes were significant opponents and obstacles to Russia's imperial aims, it faced equally formidable opposition to its southward advance across the steppes and deserts east of the Volga towards Central Asia, where its ultimate goals were Bukhara, Samarkand, Tehran and eventually India.[23]

The Nogay Horde was one of the Turkic 'nomadic states' into which the Golden Horde disintegrated in the fifteenth century. At the height of their power under Musa and Yamgurchi the Nogays participated in the expedition of Khan Ahmad of the Great Horde against Moscow in 1480, in the course of which the Nogays murdered the khan, thus allowing the decisive defeat of the Great Horde by the Crimean Tatars. Subsequently the Nogays and Siberian Tatars raided Kazan, Astrakhan and the Crimean Khanate.[24]

Meanwhile both Russia and Turkey were seeking the support of the Nogay Horde, who tried to play one off against the other. Nogay influence was undermined by internal conflicts, however, and the 'Lesser Horde' moved to Azak and submitted to Crimean protection. The leader of the Great Horde on the Volga (some 350,000 people), with its winter base on the Yaik (Ural), swore allegiance to Ivan IV in

1554 and 1557 – but once again, as the Nogays did not pay tribute, these oaths did not signify subjugation, but merely their acceptance of Russian protection. The Nogays retained their sovereignty, and regularly sent ambassadors to Moscow, which relied greatly on trade with them, as they sent several big caravans per year, supplying up to 20,000 horses and as many sheep in exchange for armaments, grain, textiles, paper, etc. From the 1550s, however, after the Russians conquered Kazan and Astrakhan, Nogay–Muscovite trade began to decline. The Russians began to look upon the Nogays too as their subjects, and the latter could scarcely challenge this as they suffered by the loss of the Kazan market after the Russian conquest, and several natural calamities. Eventually the Great Horde too split between Yusuf's Yaik clans and those of his brother Isma^{c}il, grazing closer to the Volga, and in the 1610s and 1620s Moscow temporarily lost its Nogay subjects, as many shifted allegiance to the Crimean Khanate. Meanwhile in North Caucasus the Great Nogay Horde was beset by internal feuding and attacks by the Lesser Horde, so that in 1631 most of them moved back to the Volga–Ural region, where they remained independent until finally coming under Russian rule at the turn of the eighteenth century.[25]

Smaller numbers of another Turkic people migrated into North Caucasus in the late seventeenth century – Turkmens from the steppes west of the Aral Sea. Threatened by frequent raiding by the powerful Central Asian khanate of Khiva, they had retreated west around the Caspian, settling on the Manych and Kuma rivers in what later became Stavropol province.[26]

The more unfamiliar newcomers to North Caucasus at this time were the Kalmyks – today a small community numbering about 175,000, living west of Astrakhan, on the extreme northern edge of what may come within the Caucasus. The Kalmyks have a history evoking long Asian connections with Mongolia and Tibet, being part of the Mongol people's western branch, the Oirats, who were pushed westward by inter-tribal conflicts and Chinese invasions. By the fifteenth century the two main groups of Mongolian tribes were the Khalkhas, whose territory lay in the east, from the Altay range to the borders of China, while to the west, as far as the Tian-Shan, extended the pastures of the Oirats' four tribes – Dörböt, Torgout, Choros and Khoshout. In the Mongol denomination of tribes as military formations, some Oirats were known as 'Dzüün-gar', 'left arm, left wing', and their territory north of Lake Balkhash was called Dzungaria. It was their Central Asian Turkic neighbours who called the Oirats 'Kalmyk' – 'those who leave or secede' (in their own language this became *Khalmg*). After many conflicts between the Oirats and the Khalkhas, the Oirats briefly gained the upper hand in the fifteenth century, but later they were driven west by the Chahars of China's 'Inner Mongolia'.[27]

The Mongols possessed a long history of culture, predating Chingis Khan's campaigns, and writing reached them in the thirteenth century, when the Uighur Turks' alphabet was adapted by the Khalkhas, and subsequently a bookish tradition developed.[28] Resisting proselytizers of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, most Mongols remained Shamanists until the sixteenth century, when Altan Khan, after a campaign in Tibet, brought back Buddhist lamas of the Yellow Hat sect to eastern Mongolia. The Oirats adopted Buddhism somewhat later, after their Sanskrit scholar Namkhaizhamso returned from Tibet.[29] Thereafter they maintained contact with Tibet, sending embassies to Lhasa when a khan died, to obtain from the Dalai Lama the title of khan for his successor.[30]

In the late sixteenth century, under pressure from the Khalkhas in the east and the Kazaks in the south, some Oirats were driven north to the edge of the Siberian forest, where they solicited Russian protection in 1610.[31] Their neighbours here were the Nogays, living south of the Urals between the Emba and Volga rivers, and this region was soon taken over by Oirats, whom the Russians knew as Kalmyks.[32] They sent emissaries to Moscow in 1607, merely requesting access to pastures and protection from the Khalkhas and Kazaks, but their oath of allegiance to the tsar was inflated by Russian historians into the Kalmyks' 'voluntary submission to Russia'.[33] In 1623 the Oirat prince Kho-Örlük arrived on the Volga, leading 250,000 Torgouts and Khoshouts in a migration which drove most Nogays out, and in 1632 he brought the Oirats across the Volga into the Astrakhan steppe. The Nogay Lesser Horde fled westward from this Mongol invasion, fighting their way through a Don Cossack cordon to reach Crimea, and in 1636, to facilitate a similar migration of the Great Horde, the Crimean khan's army escorted them across the Don steppe, where they submitted to him. As a result, the Nogays became established in North Caucasus, the Lesser Horde east of the Azov Sea and north of the Kuban, while the Great Horde pastures lay farther east towards the Terek.[34] So great was the apprehension aroused by the Kalmyks that Moscow and the Crimeans formed a defensive alliance against them.[35]

Nogay groups under Russian protection near the Volga were forced by the Kalmyks to retreat west of Astrakhan, while those to the east were absorbed into the Kalmyks. Indeed, many Nogays, because of their insecure position, began to switch allegiance between the Crimeans, the Kalmyks and the Russians, and in 1638 most of them moved towards Turkey's Azov fort. Other Nogays obtained Russian protection at Astrakhan but, as they were already fragmented and without leadership or permanent pastures, they were vulnerable to attack from all sides. Thereafter, whenever a Kalmyk attack was anticipated, the remnants of the Great Horde Nogays retreated south to the Terek, where some chose to remain under the protection of the Grebensk Cossacks and the Kumuks.[36]

Meanwhile, in 1635 the main body of Oirats in Turkestan established the Dzungarian Khanate, whose influence extended to the western Kalmyks. In 1644 the Oirats' war-leader, Kho-Örlük, set out to subject the Lesser Horde Nogays in north-west Caucasus, but was defeated and killed by them and the Kabardans. Thereafter, as the Kalmyks ranged farther west across the North Caucasus steppes, good relations developed between them and the Circassian peoples. As Moscow assumed North Caucasus to be its territory, Kalmyk pastures from the Volga to the Yaik (Ural) were now subjected to Russian pressure, while the Kalmyks' new leader, Shükr-Daichin, went to Tibet to obtain the Dalai Lama's blessing.[37] The 'Russian' Kalmyks occupied not only the same territory west of the lower Volga as they do today, but also the north Caspian steppe as far east as the river Yaik. The Kalmyks' first written agreements on allegiance to Russia,[38] whereby they swore to obey Tsar Aleksey and perform war service whenever required, were made in 1655–7 (although, as they were in Russian and Tatar, the Kalmyks could not read them). Thus the Kalmyk Khanate existed as a vassal within Russia's borders, retaining its autonomy and providing the Russians with a formidable military force similar to the Cossacks. In 1661 Shükr-Daichin adopted the title 'khan', and the Kalmyks became committed to army service for the tsar.[39] Some of the Kalmyks moved to the Don in 1669–70 where they settled in an association with the Don Cossacks which lasted for many years.[40]

However, Russia's relations with the Kalmyks became more problematic from 1672 when Ayuka Khan succeeded as their leader. One of his wives was a sister of the Kabardan prince Hasbulat (called 'Prince Cherkasskiy' by the Russians), along with whom Ayuka had led many campaigns in North Caucasus. He also fought against other Kalmyk lords, and from time to time raided Russian settlements, so that he was not always a reliable ally. In 1673, however, he swore to serve the tsar faithfully, refrain from attacking Russian settlements, and fight against Russia's Kumuk and Crimean enemies. He and Hasbulat Cherkasskiy led 10,000 Kalmyks and Circassians in joint expeditions with Don and Zaporozhyan Cossacks against Crimea, where '[t]he Kalmyk cavalry, able to strike with lightning speed, was invaluable' in helping to divert the Turks from their current war in Poland.[41] Ayuka's agreement with Russia stipulated that Kalmyks who absconded to towns in Russia must not be converted to Christianity, and must be returned to the khanate. Conversion to Orthodoxy automatically made converts Russian subjects, so Kalmyk Christians were protected against retrieval by the khan by settling them in distant areas, particularly among the Don Cossacks.[42]

Subsequently Ayuka became less responsive to the tsar's requests for troops, and more difficult to control. In 1674, for instance, instead of joining the Russians fighting the Turks at Azov, he harassed Russian settlers and travellers on the Volga, and from time to time neighbouring Turkmens, Daghestanis, Kabardans and Kuban Tatars. He also maintained cordial relations with the Crimean khan, helping him to withstand the Russian siege of Azov by supplying him with cattle, and joining the Nogays, Crimeans and Bashkorts in raiding Russian settlements – while continuing to sell large numbers of horses in Moscow.[43] By 1690 Ayuka had amassed great wealth and power through his commercial, military and diplomatic skills, in recognition of which the Dalai Lama conferred on him the title of khan. Tsar Peter took this as a recommendation, and before leaving for western Europe in 1697 entrusted Ayuka with guarding Russia's south-eastern frontier. For this Ayuka received artillery, a guarantee that Kalmyks could cross the Volga freely, and the promise that no attempt would be made to Christianize them. During Peter's Northern War (1700–21) the Kalmyks became Russia's most reliable source of recruits, supplying 40,000 first-class cavalry, out of a total Kalmyk population of only 200,000 people.[44] Although Ayuka remained erratic, and his men plundered Russian settlements, he made an active contribution to Russian campaigns, sending 5,000 Kalmyks to suppress Chechen and Nogay uprisings, and more than 6,000 to fight the Swedes. In the 1710–11 Russo-Turkish War, when the Nogays and Kuban Tatars allied themselves with the Crimeans, Peter I once again allotted a special role to Ayuka, who kept his promise and sent 20,500 Kalmyks to Azov.[45]

By the time Peter undertook his Persian campaign in 1722, for which 7,000 Kalmyk horsemen were provided, Ayuka was 80 years old, and the Kalmyks were so deeply involved in Russian affairs that the tsar interfered in the question of the khan's successor by visiting Kalmykia on his way south and nominating his preferred candidate. However, when Ayuka died in 1724 there were several pretenders, and instead of the tsar's candidate, the khan's widow installed Dondg-

Omba, while St Petersburg appointed another of Ayuka's sons as viceroy.[46]

Hitherto, relations between Russia and the Kalmyks had been overseen by the Foreign Ministry, and even those residing in Don Cossack territory were independent of the Russian government until 1718, when the whole Cossack community lost its autonomy and came under the War Ministry. Thereafter, while the Kalmyks in the Volga Khanate remained autonomous aliens under Peter I's new College of Foreign Affairs, those living on the Don were assigned to regular Cossack service.[47]

The situation on Russia's south-eastern steppe frontier changed after Ayuka died in 1724 and Peter in 1725. Now Russian governments not only commissioned the Orthodox Church to convert the Kalmyks, but also permitted Russian peasants to settle on Kalmyk land. Affronted by this, the Kalmyks resumed their raids on Russian territory, and in 1729 conferred with the Dzungarians about a possible joint campaign against Russia. Meanwhile disagreements occurred between Kalmyk princes and the Russians, and dissident Kalmyks made direct diplomatic approaches to Persia and Turkey. Because the Russians once again appointed a khan, Dondg's widow and her son decamped to Kabarda, requesting aid from Nadir Shah, and with their Kabardan allies organized raids on Volga Kalmykia.[48]

Russia's reorganization of the Kalmyks continued with a census, followed by a reform specifying which recent fugitives must return to the khanate, and which counted as regular Cossacks, and could remain elsewhere, creating a rigid administrative distinction between Kalmyks living under Don Cossack control and those in the khanate. Under a disastrous Russian project in 1743, Kalmyks (who, like all nomads, loathed the plough) were relocated in agricultural settlements on a new line of guard posts along the right bank of the lower Volga, while the east bank was opened up for settlement with Russian serfs, and the Kalmyks were pushed back from the river and their pastures divided among peasant settlers and fishermen.[49]

Throughout the eighteenth century conflict loomed east of the Volga among the Kalmyks' relatives in Dzungaria, into which Galdan Khan had incorporated all of western Mongolia by the 1690s. Dzungar attacks on Chinese colonies in Outer Mongolia in the 1720s evoked fierce retaliation, with the massacre of 80,000 Mongols, and in 1755 the Chinese overran Dzungaria. When the Dzungar chief Amrsanan killed the local Chinese garrison and with Kazak support had himself proclaimed khan, this gave the Chinese a pretext to annihilate the Dzungars. In 1756 they reportedly massacred more than a million, while the Russians stood by, offering no help to their Asiatic neighbours.[50]

On the Volga St Petersburg continued to reduce autonomy in the Kalmyk Khanate. When Khan Dondg-Dash died in 1761, the leader appointed by the Russians, Ubsh,[51] was subordinated to a Russian chancellery, called in Kalmyk the *zargo*, Empress Catherine II (1762–96) 'reorganized' the Kalmyks further, so that they no longer had a khan, but merely a Russian-appointed viceroy.[52] Yet, in the Seven Years War (1756–63) Russia put more Kalmyks into the field than Don Cossacks,[53] and during the 1768–74 Russo-Turkish War 20,000 Kalmyk cavalry covered the frontier between Azov and the Dnepr, while others fought against the Crimean Tatars in Circassia. In 1700–70 more than 130,000 Kalmyks were mobilised for Russian war service, and participated in every Russian campaign without exception.[54]

Meanwhile Russia's relentless peasant colonization of the lower Volga deprived the Kalmyks of pastures and access to water, and drove them into areas of arid steppe. It became clear that Russia was forcing the Kalmyks to become sedentary, and that their right to the Astrakhan steppe would be disregarded as St Petersburg, committed to the abolition of nomadism, intended to bring in more peasants. When land was allocated to German colonists, Ubsh Khan sent several (unheeded) protests to St Petersburg in 1765–6 about the incomers' seizure of Kalmyk pastures – while another newly introduced colony of the Moravian sect actually complained about the destruction of 'their fields' by the Kalmyks! Kalmyk desperation in the face of ever-increasing Russian encroachment came to a head in January 1771, when Ubsh led a mass exodus from the khanate. Some 169,000 Kalmyks crossed the Volga and headed east with the aim of reaching the old Dzungarian capital on the Ili. After eight months of privations and dangers, including pursuit by Russian troops and raiding by Kazaks, only 70,000 reached their journey's end.[55]

Thereafter the Kalmyks' autonomy was further curtailed. The khanate's status as an unassimilated vassal was abolished, along with the title 'khan', their traditional laws were annulled, and their legislature (*zargo*) was placed under a Russian 'Department of Kalmyk Affairs'. Instead of the Kalmyks being mobilized by ad hoc agreement with the reigning khan, the Russian government now gave direct orders to the Kalmyk leaders. No doubt the Russian government perceived further reason for distrusting the Kalmyks in 1773–5, when some joined with discontented

Russians, Cossacks, Bashkorts and Tatars in the huge peasant uprising in the Volga–Ural region led by the Don Cossack Pugachov.[56] Kalmyk rights were further reduced in 1786 when, in conformity with the reduction of the Caucasus to colonial status by the creation of the Caucasus governor-generalship, all Kalmyk administration was transferred to a 'Kalmyk Chancellery', which made frequently arbitrary changes, such as the attempt by Catherine II's favourite Grigoriy Potyomkin to force the remaining Dörböts to settle in 1788, which caused the departure of 24,500 more Kalmyks to the Don.[57]

At the end of the eighteenth century the Kalmyks, like other communities in the Russian Empire, suddenly received good news, as the new tsar Paul I (1796–1801) reversed much of the legislation introduced by Catherine II. In 1800 Paul summoned the Dörböt prince Khukha Tundutov and a senior lama, annulled the decrees abolishing the khanate, appointed Tundutov as prince (*taishi*) and Sobin Baksha as Head Lama, and restored former pastures, Kalmyk law and the *zargo*. However, this revival lasted a very short time, as Paul was assassinated in 1801 and Alexander I came to the throne. When Tundutov died in 1803 the restored Kalmyk autonomy ended, and they reverted to the situation prevailing in 1796, with the continuing obligation to fulfill arduous military duties for the Russian state.[58]

Kuban, Circassia, Crimea, the Ukrainian Cossacks

Until the late eighteenth century the Russians, apart from seizing the steppe from the Don to the Terek, were unable to play any direct part in Caucasian politics, except by occasionly responding to Georgian rulers' requests for protection and granting them asylum in Moscow. Practically the whole region surrounding the Black Sea was subject to Turkey, the northern zone, from the Dnepr to the Kuban, being dominated by its vassal, the Crimean Khanate. Russia had frequently been at war with Turkey: between 1675 and 1740 on four occasions, totalling some 24 years, and between 1765 and 1830 four times, totalling 18 years. Thereafter the Crimean War and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8 would add another three-and-a-half years. While these conflicts were principally concerned with the Ottoman Empire's northern and western borderlands, none was without fighting in the Caucasian theatre, including Crimea.[59]

A lesser obstacle than the Ottomans to Russia's advance into north Caucasus was the presence of the Nogays – whom Russian officials arbitrarily called ‘a very dangerous people because of their inherent wildness’[60] – and who owed irregular allegiance to the Crimeans. The Nogay clans inhabiting the Kuban steppe had gradually been brought under Russian control with the collaboration of the Kalmyks, but although the Russians, as they tightened their grip on Crimea in the 1770s, vied with the Turks in soliciting their support, the Nogays resisted both. Russian occupation of the steppe continued, with the foundation of Stavropol (whose Greek name means ‘City of the Cross’) in 1777, and it was frequently raided by Nogays, sometimes in alliance with Circassians. Dissatisfaction with their Crimean overlord, Khan Shahin Giray, was the cause of a big uprising of Nogays and Circassians in 1781, and rumours of Russian plans to push the Nogays away to the north-east also caused unrest, during which more of them moved south across the Kuban into western Circassia.[61]

In 1783, despite the Nogays’ swearing loyalty after Russia's annexation of Crimea, the Russians made another attempt to force them to move from the Kuban to the arid north Caspian steppe. However, the Nogays killed their Russian armed escort and rode south again, intending to cross the Kuban and join their brethren in Circassia, but they were intercepted by Russian troops and many slaughtered. As the survivors besieged a Russian fort near Azov, Empress Catherine gave the order for ‘the decisive defeat, annihilation or capture’ of the Nogays, who were ‘not Russia's subjects but enemies of the fatherland deserving every punishment’.[62] A series of massacres in the Kuban steppe followed over the next few years, with few prisoners taken, resulting in the extermination of the Nogays and the expulsion of scattered remnants to the Crimean steppe, leaving the whole Kuban plain practically empty and available for Russian colonization. A few Nogays did survive south of the Kuban, but, already destitute after their struggle, they were preyed upon by the Circassians, to whom many surrendered their wives and children as slaves. Nogay refugees roamed the Turkish Black Sea coast and valleys until starvation forced them to return to Russian-occupied territory north of the river and seek pastures in the inhospitable Manych steppe or move east across barren wilderness towards the Terek.[63] This was the first of many genocidal colonial wars waged by the Russians during the ensuing 100 years, which would leave several North Caucasian countries almost without native inhabitants apart from homeless outcasts.

Meanwhile, in Ukraine in the 1760s the land around the Dnepr rapids was still occupied by the Zaporozhyan Cossacks, defiantly independent since 1686, along with the whole Left Bank Ukraine, despite nominal subjection to

Russia. Suffering Peter I's wrath for their defection during the Northern War, in 1711 the Zaporozhyans sought the protection of the sultan and established a new Sich near the mouth of the Dnepr. However, an impending war with Turkey in 1733 led the Russian government to allow them to return to their old lands and self-government. Nevertheless, Zaporozhya's independence was stifled by subordination to the Russian military command, who showed their intention of subjecting it completely by building forts there.[64]

The final subjugation of the Ukrainian Cossacks came after the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74, during which they played an important part fighting along with the Russians in Romania and Bulgaria. The Zaporozhyans' fate was sealed by their participation in Ukraine's anti-Polish rebellion in 1768: at the end of the war the Russian army occupied the 'land beyond the rapids', surrounded the Cossacks in the Sich and disarmed them. Tricked into dining with the Russian general commanding, many senior Cossack officers were arrested and sent to St Petersburg, pending imprisonment in Russia's Far North, from which very few returned. Empress Catherine had the Sich fortifications demolished, and their territory distributed among her favourites, or to Russian squires or colonists from Serbia and Germany.[65] Many Cossacks rejected the descent into serfdom which would have been inevitable, and fled to Ottoman territory, where in response to their petition 'not to be put into the tyrannical hands of Russia', the sultan granted them land in the Danube delta. By 1776 some 7,000 Zaporozhyans willing to become Turkish mercenaries had congregated there. To counteract this, the Russian government established a Ukrainian Cossack organization called the 'Black Sea Army' near Zaporozhya, but subsequently they were moved east to the Kuban in North Caucasus, where they settled with the same rights and obligations as the Don Cossacks, and were much used during Russia's subjugation of the Caucasian peoples. In speech and customs the Kuban Cossacks of Ukrainian origin to this day form an ethnic group distinct from their neighbours, who are descended from Russia's Don Cossacks.[66]

At the same time as the Zaporozhyan Cossacks were brought under Russian control the Crimean Khanate was also being subjugated. With the Ottoman Empire in decline, Catherine determined to push the southern frontier of the Russian Empire down to the Black Sea, where the khanate was the main obstacle. After several Russian attempts, in 1768 Baghchisarai and Kaffa were taken, the khan capitulated, and in 1774 the Russo-Turkish treaty of Küchük Kainarji recognized the separate existence of a Crimean state under an elected khan, whose subjects as before included Nogays and Circassians. Russia installed garrisons to discourage Ottoman attacks, but the Turks retained their religious authority, and the khanate was annexed to Russia only after nine more years of intrigue and strife. Khan Daulat Giray IV, who seized power with the help of the Circassians and Abazas and offered allegiance to the sultan, was driven out by the Russians in 1776, and in his place they installed Shahin Giray – a young prince who had taken Empress Catherine's fancy, but proved to be the last khan of Crimea. Ostensibly out of concern for the safety of Greek and Armenian Christians living in Crimea the Russians removed them to Azov, and Shahin, thus deprived of his craftsmen and businesspeople, found his economic position insecure. Meanwhile the Ottomans continued their attempts to regain control of the Black Sea coast by inciting the Nogays against the khan and the Russians, and made a naval attack on Crimea in 1778. After another revolt against Shahin Giray Catherine lost faith in his régime, and annexed Crimea outright in 1783.[67]

Until the early eighteenth century western Circassia and Kabarda were kept under Turkish control by the constant threat of invasion by the Crimean Tatars. But Russia always had supporters among the Kabardan aristocracy, which now split into two factions: the pro-Russian ‘Baksan group’ led by Princes Atazhuko and Mishost, who were useful to St Petersburg in keeping the Osets, Balkars, Ingush and other peoples in subjection and guarding the passes to Georgia; and the pro-Turkish ‘Kaskatau’ party led by Prince Kaituko, who in 1731 sided with the Crimeans against the Baksan faction. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1735–9 these groups were reconciled after Russia promised to recognize Kabarda's independence, but the Treaty of Belgrade again reduced Russian influence in Crimea and Kabarda, which was designated as a neutral buffer state between Turkey and Russia.[68] In 1763 the Kabardan princes protested strongly against Russia's seizure of Mozdok (founded by the Kabardans in 1759) and their encroachment upon Kabardan land on the pretext that ‘the only reliable way of consolidating our [Russian] control of western Circassia is to occupy the foothills and mountains with armed Cossack settlements’.[69] As Kabardan serfs began to abscond from estates to gain the ‘protection’ offered by the Russians at Mozdok, in 1767 a number of ‘Baksan’ lords decided to spurn Russia and withdraw into the valleys of tributaries of the Kuban adjacent to the Karachays and west Circassians, with whom they formed an alliance. St Petersburg's response to this was an instruction to commanders in the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74 that ‘whatever the terms of a future treaty with Turkey, Kabarda must become part of Russia’, and moreover, that it was ‘essential that we always keep two equally balanced parties in Kabarda’. In the same arrogant spirit, a Kabardan delegation to St Petersburg in 1771 requesting the demolition of Mozdok fort was simply told that Russia would not comply, because Kabarda belonged to

Russia. Understandably, Kabarda reacted by drawing closer to Turkey again and allying itself with the Crimeans in an unsuccessful attack on Mozdok. Another consequence was that, as a reaction against Russian bullying, Islam gained ground rapidly throughout Circassia.[70]

Half of the Volga Cossack Host, which had been formed in 1732 to man the Tsaritsyn defensive line, was transferred in 1770 from the lower Volga to the Terek, forming a new Cossack regiment at Mozdok to threaten the Kabardans. This attracted some recruits from ‘peaceful’ (i.e. collaborative) native communities, including Kabardans willing to subjugate their neighbours. Kabarda finally became part of the Russian Empire by the Treaty of Küchük Kainarji – which many Kabardan princes saw as disastrous. Thereafter, the Mozdok regiment was reinforced with the remaining Volga Cossacks and about 1,000 Christian Kalmyks, and Russia's annexation of Crimea and the north Kuban steppe provided a bridgehead for further penetration into the Caucasus.[71]

The Russians had built a line of forts from Kabarda to Mozdok, effectively separating Kabarda from Chechenia and making their mutual support more difficult, in accordance with St Petersburg's policy ‘above all to avert the unification of the mountain peoples, by kindling the flames of dissension among them’.[72] Nevertheless, in 1774 all the indigenous peoples of north Caucasus except the Osetians united for a war of resistance, during which combined groups of Kabardans, west Circassians, Chechens and Daghestanis faced much larger Russian forces. Thereafter the Russians built more military ‘lines’ along their frontier with the Ottoman Empire, from the Sea of Azov to Mozdok. Their construction of fortifications on Circassian territory angered the Kabardan princes, who in 1778 renewed their anti-

Russian struggle, which, however, soon ended with the defeat of Kabarda after the loss of 400 of its senior nobles. Russia, the instigator of the war, extorted ‘reparations’ amounting to 10,000 rubles and thousands of horses, cattle and sheep – ‘armed robbery…causing suffering to the whole Kabardan people’, especially as seizure of livestock and land was combined with an economic blockade obstructing access to the salt lakes essential to livestock-breeders. In 1783, when Russia's annexation of Crimea and the Don–Kuban steppe was proclaimed, Circassia remained divided, Kabarda belonging to Russia, while western Circassia, including its Black Sea coast, was still held by the sultan.[73]

In the late eighteenth century the alien settler population in North Caucasus grew rapidly as St Petersburg encouraged colonization of the steppe by peasants from Russia and Ukraine. Other new settlers came from South Caucasus, including Armenian and Georgian refugees from Persia and Turkey who came to settle mainly at Mozdok and Kyzlar, while much of the older Armenian community of North Caucasus migrated to establish the town of Nakhchavan-on-Don near Rostov. Because of this influx the Kabardans, Osets and Chechens who had been encouraged by the Russians to move down to the plain were again pushed off the best land, causing even more resentment against the Russian invaders and their Cossack frontier troops.[74]

Daghestan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

One aspect of the relationship between the shahs of Persia and their non-Persian subjects in the Caucasus which was consistently falsified in accounts written under the communist régime was whether Shirvan (today's northern

Azerbaijan) and Daghestan were subjects of Persia after the sixteenth century. Soviet Russian accounts generally asserted that they were not, but their accounts could be rather obscure, e.g.:

> The Safavid shahs continued to consider Daghestan as their territory, and on this basis interfered in the internal affairs of Daghestan's feudal possessions. They confirmed feudal lords in their rights of possession and issued title-deeds. So, for instance, in 1711 Shah Husayn confirmed Ahmad Khan as the *utsmi*. In addition to his income from the tenure of Ḳaitag his salary was raised from 100 tumans to 200.[75]

This seems to confirm that throughout this period Daghestan was indeed part of Persia, although the executive power of the shahs varied in strength (as it did even within Persia's core provinces) and the central government had to reassert its suzerainty from time to time.

For the peoples of Daghestan conditions were hard throughout the eighteenth century, as they lived in an almost continuous state of war. Anti-Iranian insurgency arose when the Jar and Tsakhur unions of communes in Tabasaran and the Samur valley clashed with their Turkic-speaking neighbours in Shirvan on grounds of Islamic dogma, with the war cry ‘for Sunnism against the Shi^{c}i heretics’. Violence quickly spread throughout Daghestan and Shirvan, its main instigators being Lezgistan's leading Sunni imam, Hajji Dawud from Avaristan and Cholak Surkhay-Khan, the ruler of the Ghazi–Kumukh khanate, which was considered the main Islamic centre in Daghestan, supported by Ahmad Khan of Ḳaitag. This rebellion started about 1707–11 but did not gather momentum as an anti-Persian movement until 1721.[76]

In 1717 and 1719, as Tsar Peter made active preparations for his invasion of Daghestan, Adil-Giray, the *shamkhal* of Tarki, and his neighbours in the south, including the *utsmi* of Ḳaitag, wrote to Peter, offering co-operation. This confirmed the opinion of the tsar's adviser on Caucasian affairs, A. P. Volynskyy, that via the Terek and the Caspian coast it would be possible to annex a large part of eastern Caucasus with relatively few troops.[77]

So far as the legitimacy of the Russians' and Ottomans' intentions is concerned, these events were taking place at a time when Persia had no effective ruler, although since the 1660s it had had three nominal shahs.[78] Sulayman/Ṣafi II (1666–94) had been reared in confinement in the harem until the age of 19 and continued to reside there as shah, taking advice from the ladies and eunuchs, of whom there were many, and drinking wine. Sultan-Husayn (1694–1722) was similarly reared until the age of 26, with a Lezgi grand vizier who, as a rabid Shi^{c}ite, introduced compulsory conversion of Sunnites until the Afghan usurper Maḥmud made him abdicate. Tahmasp II (1722–32) emerged from a mass of pretenders to become shah when Persia's government system 'was on the point of collapse because of a lack of talented personalities in the government', and was himself no less weak and unreliable than his predecessors, but he brought to the capital as his regent the renowned General Nadir Afshar, who quickly asserted himself as the real ruler, with the shah a puppet in his hands. At the price of deposing first Tahmasp and then his infant successor ^{c}Abbas III (1732–6), the general (and former bandit leader) reigned as Nadir-Shah Afshar (1736–47), although his reputation was much less for statesmanship than as a war leader ruthlessly profligate with the lives of his subjects.[79]

Anti-Persian rebellion in Daghestan broke out again in August 1721, its aim being, in Hajji-Dawud's words: ‘not to gain power or riches…[but only] to liberate the Sunnites from the Kyzylbashis’.[80] The Lezgis, with their allies the Ghazi–Kumukh *khan*, the Ḳaitag *utsmi*, the Tsakhur *sultan* and the Kutkashen *malik*, made their first target Shamakha, the capital of Shirvan, and indulged their hatred by slaughtering the city's Shi^{c}ites, starting with the governor, the shah's viceroy Husayn Khan. Incidentally they also attacked and robbed Russian merchants who had established themselves there, killing five of them. The number of Russians involved, the total value of the goods they lost and who caused the incident remain controversial questions: ‘Until now historians have asserted that the [Daghestani] rebels robbed the Russian merchants simply for their own gain. However, this view has been refuted…It seems likely that the rebels, who promised not to harm the Russian merchants, would have kept their word if the Russians had not sided with the Persian merchants, and shot at the rebels.’ The (Azerbaijani) historian quoted acknowledges that ‘this [episode] subsequently served as a pretext for introducing Russian troops into the Caspian region’ – that is, their invasion of Persian territory.[81]

As the Daghestanis’ anti-Persian uprising continued, Surkhay Khan and Hajji-Dawud hedged their bets by offering submission to Russia but simultaneously asking the Ottoman sultan for protection, which was granted. The result was a recognition of spheres of interest in the Caucasus: by the Treaty of Istanbul (1724) the western half, including Georgia and Armenia, went to Russia and the east to the shah. The collaboration of the two Daghestani insurgent leaders did not last long, however, as the Turks invaded Hajji-Dawud's Khanate of Shirvan and Kuba. They then switched their support to Surkhay, and eventually Hajji-Dawud was taken to Rhodes, where he soon died.[82]

The wider context of these events involved the whole Near East. Early in the eighteenth century, during an interregnum in Istanbul, the Persians began to regain Azerbaijan and western Caucasus from the Turks, and in 1733 the latter were obliged by the Treaty of Baghdad to relinquish all former Persian possessions. Thereafter Nadir Shah invaded Shirvan and Daghestan in order to punish Surkhay Khan of Ghazi–Kumukh and the Avar leader Hajji-Dawud for defying Persian authority since 1711. Believing that without control over Daghestan he could not keep Georgia and Azerbaijan in subjection, Nadir launched several Daghestani campaigns in 1734–45, destroying towns and villages and massacring the population. Nearly all communities in Shirvan and Daghestan defied Nadir and his Kyzylbashis, but the Avars, including women, were particularly courageous. Although Daghestan gained a respite after Nadir's death, in Shirvan the late 1740s saw the beginning of a long period of internecine strife among the twenty-eight separate principalities into which it disintegrated.[83] During the sixteenth century, because of the partial collapse of the Kumuk *shamkhal*'s state of Tarki, the dominant ruler in Daghestan had become the *nutsal* of the Avars, whose domains, centred on the Khunzakh plateau, had under the rule of Umma-Khan the Just (died 1634) advanced northwards beyond the Andi Koisu valley as far as the upper Argun in Chechenia, and southward from the Avar Koysu beyond the mountain ridge on to the Jar-Belakan slopes on the Kakheti frontier. A century later another Umma-Khan of Avaristan (1774–1801) became powerful enough to exact tribute not only from several other Daghestani khanates and free societies, but also from Shaki, Shirvan and Baku, as well as King Ereḳle II of Georgia and the Turkish *pashalyk* of Akhaltsikhe.[84]

In the eighteenth century many Daghestani raiding parties, ranging in size from about 400 to several thousand, were led by Cholak Surkhay Khan of Ghazi–Kumukh and Sultan Ahmad Khan, the *utsmi* of Kara-Ḳaitag, and later Nur-^{c}Ali Khan of the Avars and his son ^{c}Umar. For a time the formerly Georgian frontier district of Zakatala was the base for their operations (it was here that a community of Georgian Muslims, called Ingilos, ‘newly converted’, arose in the seventeenth century). It is typical of the complexity of Caucasian relations that on the one hand some of the fiercest leaders of Daghestani raiding parties were Georgian or Armenian renegades, while on the other hand Georgian kings, such as Solomon I of Imereti (1735–84), sometimes turned to Daghestani allies for help against the Turks.[85]

Political and juridical institutions in North Caucasus, as in all Muslim countries, were dictated by the Koran and *shari*^{c}*ah*, but many aspects of life were governed by local customary law – ^{c}*adat*. While these laws (particularly those affecting women, slavery and religious belief) were rigid, even in Daghestan their modification could be considered: the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw an attempt not only to record the existing laws, but also to regularize and, to some extent, reform them, particularly those concerning violent crime. In the Codes compiled by Umma-Khan of Avaristan and Rustum Khan of Ḳaytag, the general trend was towards exacting fines instead of obliging a victim's family to wreak blood-vengeance. ‘The killer was to leave his village quickly, while members of his commune did all they could to reconcile the families involved…with the aim of substituting a redemption payment for a retaliatory killing.'[86] Nevertheless, it was the local mullahs who had the final say in many cases of crime, and indeed in the eighteenth century, when the democratic gatherings of all the members of a community were losing their significance, in some regions it was the mullahs rather than the secular rulers who took power. This was particularly marked in Akusha-Dargo, where the union of six societies came to be ruled by the Akusha *qāḍi* (Arabic 'judge, magistrate'), 'in whose hands religious, civil and military power were concentrated. This… made the qadi of Akusha the most influential feudal lord in Daghestan.'[87]

Arabic culture had been flourishing in Daghestan since the sixteenth century, with scholars congregating in such centres as Darband, Sogratl, Khunzakh, Akhty and Akusha to study philosophy, law, rhetoric, history and geography. In Avaristan, Sheykh Ṣaliḥ al-Yamanī presided over a circle of Islamic scholars, including Muhammad Musa of Kudutl, and 'In the eighteenth century parties of Daghestani scholars went to Damascus and Aleppo to learn…the Arab language and the sharī^{c}a.'[88] Thus in Daghestan, where so many different local languages existed, the only common written language until the twentieth century was Arabic.[89] Although, as in most parts of the Caucasus, population figures for the native peoples are scarce before the nineteenth century, it is estimated that the total for Daghestan reached about one million, giving a population density of 20 per square kilometre – quite high for such mountainous territory.[90]

The question of Azerbaijan

In contrast with Georgia and Armenia – indubitably old nations whose historical records and narratives chronicle homelands which have been more or less constant over some two thousand years – Azerbaijan's history has many gaps, changing ethnonyms, languages and territories, requiring historiographical conjectures. How its disparate khanates with their ethnically mixed populations coalesced to form a nation-state has produced many differing accounts – some concerned less with establishing objectively how and when 'Azerbaijan' emerged as a self-aware people and a state than with asserting one or another 'correct' story of its unity and origins.

An account of *The Peoples of the Caucasus* published in 1962 by the USSR Academy of Sciences exemplifies the simplistic and cliché-ridden treatment of Azerbaijanian history current at that time. It states, for instance, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'The Azerbaijanis, along with other peoples of Transcaucasia, struggled heroically against their Persian and Turkish enslavers' – ignoring the fact that over millennia it was precisely Persians and Turks that jointly formed the Azerbaijani people and their culture. Azerbaijan was scarcely a separate entity at that time, when in any case the last thing the peoples of South Caucasia were capable of doing was co-operating with each other. The narrative continues with Peter I's occupation of Daghestan and 'Azerbaijan'[91] – although he never reached Azerbaijan, which lay farther south in Persia. He did visit Shirvan during his attempted conquest – which is ludicrously misrepresented as the 'strengthening of Azerbaijan's economic and political links with Russia' and as evidence that the Azerbaijani people 'were increasingly drawn towards Russia'. There follows a naive whitewashing of Russia's later annexation of Georgia and Azerbaijan – apparently without any fighting and by the fault of their own rulers:

> Amid ceaseless internal feudal conflicts and ever-growing external threats it became increasingly clear to the Azerbaijani people that their only hope for deliverance from oppression and destructive invasions by Persian and Turkish feudal lords…as well as the internecine feudal conflicts that were ruining the country, was to become part of the mighty Russian state…The union of eastern Georgia with Russia in 1801 created favourable conditions for other Transcaucasian peoples to come under Russian protection.[92]

The fact that prolonged Russian campaigns were needed to overcome Georgian, Azerbaijanian, North Caucasian and Daghestanian armed resistance – despite the 'great progressive significance of annexation to Russia in the historical destiny of the Azerbaijani people' – is blamed repetitiously on 'direct interference by Iran and Turkey, backed up by England and France'.[93]

A significant fact about Persia as a whole is that from the sixteenth century onwards there was no special connection between Turkish language and Azerbaijan, since for court, government and army purposes Persian had been largely ousted by Turkic, not only in Shirvan, which was to become today's Azerbaijan, but throughout the Persian Empire. (Ironically, in the same period Persian literature and language were very highly regarded not only at the court of the Moghal emperors in India, but also in Turkey, where even 'Ottoman rulers wrote poems in Persian.') Within Iran itself, although Farsi was widely used as the language for prose, the works produced were debased, being 'so full of empty titles, compliments and rhyming words that the original subject becomes lost or unintelligible'. Conversely, in

Persia's north-western province of Azerbaijan proper, although 'the Āzarī dialect of Persian…[which formerly was spoken over a large area, had now almost entirely] died out', but even here 'Turkish had not yet gained complete sway.'[94]

Georgia in the eighteenth century

Peter I's Persian campaign caused great turbulence in Georgia, where King Vakhtang VI (erstwhile commander-in-chief of the Persian army, Husayn Quli-Khan) defied his masters by allying himself with the Russian army in Shirvan. The shah punished his defection by instigating an attack upon him by King Konstantine of Kakheti, and as this was followed in 1724 by a full-scale Turkish invasion which conquered the whole of Georgia, Vakhtang, with a 'huge suite', fled to asylum in Russia. Although Peter's hopes of using such refugees to form a Georgian émigré army for use against the Turks and Persians came to nothing, in 1738 the first Georgian regiment (Hussars) was created in Moscow. This became the nucleus of Russia's growing Georgian exile community, which received state funds and lands to establish themselves at Vsekhsvyatskoye near Moscow, with three churches and a printing house.[95] Thereafter many Georgian nobles made careers in Russia as soldiers, diplomats and officials, and Georgian colonies also grew up in St Petersburg and Nizhniy Novgorod.[96]

The late seventeenth century had seen a flowering of intellectual activity in Georgia, inspired largely by the great scholar and writer Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, who as tutor to Vakhtang VI had encouraged him to study and edit Georgia's historical chronicles. Orbeliani, who became a Georgian Orthodox monk and then converted to Catholicism, moved to Moscow along with Vakhtang, and with their encouragement, between 1724 and 1745 the king's illegitimate son, Vakhushti Bagrationi, wrote in Georgian the first modern *History of the Georgian Kingdom*.[97] Significantly, Vakhushti composed it as six separate histories of (1) Kartli from 1469 to 1744; (2) Kakheti and Hereti from ‘the semi-legendary…First King of Iberia, Parnavaz’[98] to 1451; (3) Samtskhe and Klarjeti from Parnavaz to 1451; (4) ‘the confirmation of the Bagrationi line’ from the Old Testament King David of Israel to 1744; (5) Egrisi and Abkhazia from the legendary Targamos and Egros to AD 985; and (6) Imereti from 1259 to 1744. These separate accounts reflect the fact that Georgia – all parts of which had been united by Queen Tamar – had reverted since 1469 to the separatism indicated by Vakhushti's title: ‘The life and deeds of the Kings of Kartli after its disintegration into three kingdoms and five principalities’.[99]

The murder of Nadir Shah in 1747 caused great turbulence in Persia, during which Nadir was succeeded by his nephew ^{c}Adil. Inevitably Georgia was affected by these events, especially as ^{c}Adil Shah's favourite wife, Ketevan, was the daughter of King Teimuraz of Kartli. This could have given the king of Kartli considerable influence at the Persian court, but ^{c}Adil's reign was very brief:

> He proved unequal to the task of reestablishing order in Persia, and succumbed in 1748 to a revolt headed by his brother Ibrahim…[The latter] was hostile to the Georgian royal family, and encouraged a rebellion against T’eimuraz and Erekle which was headed by a scion of the rival Mukhranian dynasty…Archil…[The latter] managed to occupy the citadel of Tiflis…[but was ejected by] the resourceful Erekle…After Erekle had reoccupied Tiflis…his prestige was at its height.

> Many of the provincial rulers of Persia looked to him as the arbiter of the Iranian monarchy…[but] Persia was again rapidly lapsing into anarchy.[100]

In the following year an attack on the Muslim khan of Yerevan by a Persian adventurer was routed by Teimuraz and Erekle, who thereafter received tribute from the khan. The two kings followed this with further battles against various marauders in Shirvan, Karabagh, Aran and other outskirts of Persia, which greatly added to their fame in the eyes of the Turks and the Russians. As the latter were fully engaged in the wider intrigues and wars of European power politics, however, they gave no active support to the Georgians.[101]

Nor were the Georgians able to improve the disastrous condition of their homeland, which continued to suffer frequent raids by Daghestani reivers who forced their way deep into Kartli and even Imereti. A particularly debilitating consequence of Georgia's victimization by its Muslim neighbours was depopulation. By the 1770s, according to a Russian observer, there were signs of extreme poverty everywhere, and the population could not have totalled more than 400,000, perhaps rising to c. 414,000 by the end of the century.[102]

In 1760 King Teimuraz, ‘In spite of suspicions that the Russian government intended to restore the…Mukhranian dynasty to the Georgian throne’, decided to go to St Petersburg to appeal once more for help. He received a hero's welcome from Empress Elizabeth, but the time was not propitious: Russia's rulers were preoccupied with the Seven Years War in Europe, and required the neutrality of the Turks, so ‘Teimuraz's request for military assistance against the…tribes of Daghestan…was politely shelved.’[103]

Of the countries of South Caucasus in the eighteenth century only Georgia was a political entity, in so far as its eastern kingdoms, Ḳakheti and Kartli, although still subject to Persia, had on the death of Teimuraz II in 1762 become united under the rule of his son King Ereḳle II. Since 1744 Ereḳle's father Teimuraz II had ruled over Kartli, while Ereḳle was king of Ḳakheti, their accession having been decreed by Nadir Shah as a reward, probably for suppressing a rebellion by their fellow countrymen against the shah's imposition of a new tax.[104] On the other hand, all the principalities of western Georgia – Samtskhe (Meskheti), the semi-independent Guria, Megrelia and Svaneti, and the kingdoms of Imereti and Abkhazeti – had been seized by the Ottoman Empire, and their princes subjected to the sultan. The seventeenth-century Turkish traveller Evliya Chelebi considered western Georgia to be the Ottoman Empire's ‘Gürjistan province’ (*vilayet*), but admitted that its ‘beys’ were all infidels (i.e. Christians) who did not pay tribute to the sultan, but only occasional ‘gifts’:

> As the princes of Megrelistan and Gürjistan are also our subjects, in order to…confirm their subjugation they send us annually 40–50 boys and girls and a thousand pairs of goatswool socks…[In Abkhazia] we gave them all our [stock of] garments and rugs…taking in exchange girls and youths. Your faithful servant also took one Abkhaz boy-slave…the Imeretians are exempt from taxation; all they do is to send to Istanbul every year [as gifts] slaves, hawks…mules, and also Georgian women of rare beauty.

Chelebi (who entered western Georgia along with an official mission from Trebizond) found that around Tiflis maize, wheat and other cereals flourished, and that everywhere there were orchards and vineyards, but that all the Black Sea principalities were regularly pillaged by the Turks, and ‘Megrelistan’ in particular was ‘unsubdued’.[105]

Here too, however, changes were afoot in the eighteenth century: ‘The struggle of Kings T’eimuraz and Erekle for the national integrity and independence of Eastern Georgia is paralleled in western Georgia by the rise of King Solomon I…of Imereti’ (1752–65, 1768–84). As the beginning of his reign was accompanied by an uprising of the region's notoriously quarrelsome lords, headed by Rostom, the *eristavi* of Racha, and Prince Levan Abashidze, ‘Solomon soon found himself expelled from his kingdom, and took refuge with the Turkish pasha in Akhaltsikhe, but, assisted by a Turkish contingent, he just as soon regained his throne.’ Thereafter, however, his first important endeavour conflicted directly with Turkish custom: he prohibited the trade in slaves, which had deprived Georgia and neighbouring kingdoms of so many of their young people. This threatened the vested interests not only of the Turks, but also of some of the west Georgian aristocracy, and in 1757 brought upon him an invasion by Turkish troops and those of Rostom and Abashidze. These were, however, defeated by Solomon's Imeretian army and, as ‘Abashidze was slain…the king was able to confiscate a large part of the family's vast domains’.[106]

Having already married a sister of the powerful prince (Dadiani) of Megrelia, and put himself on good terms with the prince (Mamia) of Guria, King Solomon had paved the way for amicable relations within west Georgia, and could now move on towards his next goal. He perceived that Georgia's greatest weakness was disunity among its constituent principalities. Consequently, in 1758 the three monarchs, Teimuraz II of Kakheti, Erekle II of Kartli and King Solomon I of Imereti met in conference at Gori, and signed a treaty providing for mutual assistance in the event of war. The Turks meanwhile continued to oppress western Georgia, and specifically instigated a raid on Solomon's domains by the khan of Avaria. King Solomon, however, persisted in his endeavour to overcome the internal and external threats to Imereti's survival. In 1759 a council of the leading ecclesiastical and lay dignitaries assembled at Kutaisi and signed a convention, committing themselves to resist Ottoman demands for resumption of the slave trade, and to support Solomon's fight for national independence. This was accepted even by the highly independent rulers of Megrelia and Guria, who by their assent to the agreement acknowleged Solomon's supreme authority as the king of Imereti, and jointly repudiated Turkey's right to interfere in its affairs.[107]

South Caucasus at the end of the eighteenth century

In eastern Caucasia the territories claimed by the shah of Persia as vassals, apart from the Georgian kingdoms, were disunited, consisting of fifteen or more semi-independent khanates[108] under Turkic rulers (which later became known collectively as Azerbaijan) including Shamakha, Kuba, Shirvan, Shaki, Ganja, Karabagh, Nakhchavan and Yerevan, all lying north of the Araxes (the last three being historically parts of Armenia, and still largely Armenian in population). Many of Azerbaijan's non-urban inhabitants were nomadic cattle-herders. To the south, clearly within the borders of Persia, lay the khanates of Azerbaijan proper, including Tabriz, Ardabil, Talesh and Khoy, where a high proportion of the population were Turkic-speaking.[109]

By the eighteenth century, Armenians were widely dispersed throughout the Caucasus, Persia and Turkey and, as merchants and craftsmen, were conspicuous in the urban population. A century later, 'In Armenia itself, some sources say there are 2 million Armenians, others 4–5 million, but these figures are greatly exaggerated, and probably there are no more than 1 million';[110] according to the 1897 census of the Russian Empire there were 1,118,094 Armenians within the current borders of the Caucasian provinces, and Istanbul had about 180,000.[111] In Georgia there was a triple division of economic functions and social class on ethnic lines: the Georgians constituted the landowning and military class as well as the peasantry and urban poor; the Armenians dominated the towns as merchants; and the 'Tatars' (Azerbaijanis), like the other Turkic-speakers throughout Persia, provided much of both the landowning and the labouring classes. In Erekle II's Georgian kingdom, 'The three peoples had a natural centre in Tiflis, a town more Armenian and as nearly Tatar as it was Georgian.'[112]

Revolts occurred, especially among the Armenians of Artsakh (Karabagh) where five small principalities under their *melik*s (Beglaryan, Israelyan, Hassan-Jalalyan, Shahnazaryan and Avanyan), encouraged by Georgia's Vakhtang VI, rose against the Persians in 1722. In Syunik province too, the Armenians set up an independent principality which defied the shah's forces for two years. Western Caucasus was then invaded by the Turks, who stormed Yerevan, killing 10,000 of its inhabitants, and occupied Syunik and Artsakh, although Armenian *melik*s in their mountain strongholds continued determined resistance for another five years. As Russia was avoiding a war at this time, it accepted Turkey's annexation of Armenia, eastern Georgia and much of Azerbaijan. Not until the 1760s did the Armenians, with the aim of regaining their independence, form troops under Russian command, and this military collaboration continued until the 1830s.[113]

So far as social norms and institutions are concerned, eighteenth-century Caucasia in general seems a somewhat barbaric region where, for instance, it was customary to cut off captured enemies' heads as trophies. In 1720 Vakhtang VI of Kartli – a Christian king sophisticated enough to introduce book-printing to Georgia – sent the heads of 400 Daghestanis to the shah. The law codes used by King Vakhtang VI or the Georgian Church incorporated such medieval penalties as torture, mutilation, blinding and burning alive.[114] In this, of course, the Caucasus was not alone: at that time torture and mutilation were still practised in Russia too, religious heretics could be burned alive, and even in the nineteenth century Russian Cossacks were not averse to taking the heads of Caucasian enemies.[115] Nor, of course, was western Europe free from barbarous practices: the British king Charles was publicly beheaded in 1649, while under English law 200 different offences incurred the death sentence in the eighteenth century, so-called witches were burned through the prevalence of superstition, and public hanging continued until 1868. The African slave trade involved great cruelty, and in 1789 the 'enlightened' French nation in the name of liberty and human rights instituted a dictatorship which embarked upon a daily routine of sordid mechanized massacre of innocent people.

What motivated the rulers of Georgia – whose principal claim to fame and respect throughout the Middle East rested upon their superlative qualities as soldiers in the armies of the shahs of Persia – to pursue ideals of agreement and peace at this time was the same 'Enlightenment' that caused European societies to seek ways to avoid wars among themselves and to reject the most inhumane punitive practices which were until then the norm. Like all peoples in the Near East, those of the Caucasus had by the seventeenth century assimilated many of the technological advances made in Europe, such as firearms. Scientific thought – requiring ‘immense patience in observation, and great boldness in framing hypotheses’, and ‘the recognition that what had been believed since ancient times might be false’[116] – developed more slowly, continuing to face religious obscurantism long after the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo. The widespread currency of printed books from the fifteenth century had enormously facilitated the dissemination of knowledge and ideas, so that ‘Enlightenment’ percolated gradually throughout the countries of Europe from the second half of the seventeenth century, and awareness of it reached the Caucasus in the eighteenth. The first books in Armenian printed with moveable type were produced in Kraków in 1491, and in Venice from 1512; thereafter Armenian presses were established in Amsterdam and Constantinople, and in the eighteenth century in Armenia itself at Echmiadzin.

As we have seen, the first printed books in Georgian appeared in Rome (1629) and Moscow (1705).[117] There were considerable contacts between Georgia and Rome at this time (after an interruption by Timurlenk's savagery in the fourteenth century, before which there had been a Catholic bishop in Tbilisi). In 1627 a missionary, Don Christoforo de Castelli, was sent to Georgia by the Vatican's religious propaganda office, and stayed there (mainly in Megrelia) until 1654. His drawings of people and places provide a unique picture of life in Georgia.[118] In the 1660s an Italian Catholic missionary school in Tbilisi offered linguistic and religious education to as many as forty boys per year, and there were similar schools on a smaller scale in Gori, Akhaltsikhe, Kutaisi and other centres. From 1670 two places per year were also available for the most gifted pupils to continue their studies at the Pontifical College in Rome, while some sons of the Georgian aristocracy studied secular subjects at a school in Naples.[119]

The ‘Enlightenment’ ideas of such west European pioneers of free thought as Locke, Newton, Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire were taken up in the late eighteenth century by the emerging Russian intelligentsia (Ya. P. Kozelskiy, N. I. Novikov, D. I. Fonvizin, A. N. Radishchev and others).[120] In Georgia the insecurity of life amid the constant threat of Turkish, Persian and Daghestani incursions left little leisure for reading such writers, but in Moscow they were gradually assimilated by intellectuals of the Georgian exile community, such as two educated members of the royal family: Prince Ivane, who translated Condillac's *Traité des sensations* (1754), and Prince Davit, who translated Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*, as well as writing his own *History of Georgia*.[121]

The Enlightenment probably became more familiar to members of the Armenian diaspora, three of whom, living in mercantile communities in India, had considerable influence in the Caucasus. Shahamir Shahamiryan (1723–98) established in Madras an Armenian publishing house and a club of compatriots interested in discussing social and political ideas. The introduction to one of his books echoes Rousseau: ‘People are born free and equal, so they should live in freedom and equality; no-one has a right to use force to impose his power over others.’ Shahamiryan's aim – expounded in his letters to Georgia's King Erekle II – was to abolish monarchy and set up a parliamentary government, the ‘Armenian House’, where all social classes would be represented and the rights of all respected. However desirable the ideal state as conceived by the entrepreneur Shahamiryan might be, the unfortunate fact was that of all places on earth the Caucasus – and particularly Armenia under the Turkish heel – was perhaps the least likely place ever to achieve the utopia which he envisaged. Another Madras-based scholar was Movses Baghramyan, whose *New Book or Exhortation* on Armenian history was also anti-monarchic and pro-democratic, and specifically called for armed insurrection to liberate Armenia from oppression by Iran and Turkey and re-establish 'Mother Armenia' as an independent state and national home for all her exiled children.

The third widely known Armenian writer and activist of the Enlightenment was Hovsep (Joseph) Emin (1726–1809). Born in Persia in a merchant's family, he experienced all the insecurity of the Christian minority under the shah's arbitrary rule, and even before he went to join the family business in Calcutta at the age of 18 he swore to devote his life to fighting for liberation from the Muslim yoke. The standards of behaviour and training of the British army in India excited his admiration, so that in 1751 he absconded and took ship for England. After a hard start he made some influential friends, including Edmund Burke, and eventually trained in the Royal Military Academy. He then served as a volunteer on the European front in the Seven Years War until 1759, when he travelled via Turkey to Armenia to enlist support for a war of Armenian liberation. When the Armenian hierarchy did not respond to his political message because of their lack of education and their narrow horizons, Emin decided to seek the co-operation of King Erekle of Georgia. This necessitated another long journey – back to London, then by sea to St Petersburg, where Count A. R. Vorontsov gave him an introduction to King Erekle. In Tbilisi the king was sympathetic towards the idea of a Georgian–Armenian alliance to recover the two countries' independence from Turkey, but decided that it was impracticable. Nor did Emin have any greater success with the Circassians or the Karabagh Armenians, and in 1770 he abandoned his hopes of liberating his motherland, and returned to India.[122]

Thus during the closing decades of the eighteenth century up-to-date political ideas were current in the Caucasus, but neither the Georgians nor the Armenians could see any hope of relief from victimization by their predatory neighbours except through Russian intervention.

Tsaritsa Catherine II's 'Oriental Project' and the Caucasus

The fact that Russia in the hands of Empress Catherine II was scarcely to be relied upon to save an imperilled nation like Georgia was demonstrated by her final extravagant act on the stage of history. She had described the French philosoper Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* as 'the prayer book of monarchs', and affected profound respect for the rule of law, but when her own self-regard was piqued she condoned corporal punishment, and persecuted Russia's 'devout champion of progress', Nikolay Novikov, by closing down his outstanding publishing business after the French Revolution, and having him imprisoned, because of 'his witty and earnest attacks on…the very core of contemporary [Russian] society…serfdom'.[123] Having become empress in 1762 by ousting her husband, the legitimate tsar Peter III (who was then murdered by her current lover, Count Grigory Orlov) she consorted for the next 30 years with a series of 'favourites',[124] the last of whom, Platon Zubov, was 22 years old when she honoured him in 1789. It was Orlov who had first conceived Catherine's ‘Greek Project’ – the idea that Russia should ‘expel the Turks from Europe’ and restore the Byzantine Empire (under the rule of a Russian emperor). Although this general idea lay behind Russia's annexation of the Khanate of Crimea and two Russo-Turkish Wars, it did not become St Petersburg's explicit foreign policy until 1796.[125] ‘The lust of the empress for territorial acquisition and military laurels was not satiated with Polish victories and was not dampened by old age’ and, as she wished to indulge Platon Zubov's taste for adventures, she allowed him to revive the ‘Greek Project’ in a new form:

> The grandiose plan…provided for a Russian invasion of the Caucasus and Persia and the occupation of all important trade stations between Turkey and Tibet, thus establishing a direct link with India and isolating Constantinople from the east. Simultaneously an army under Suvorov was to cross the Balkans and reach…[Istanbul] from the north, while the Black Sea fleet, led by the empress in person…was to force the straits of Constantinople. Valerian Zubov…[Platon's] younger brother…was appointed commander of the Persian expedition.[126]

Although he was, like Platon, ‘an impecunious, ignorant, ambitious, and arrogant youth’, Valerian was extremely handsome and, in Catherine's eyes, ‘the greatest general in Europe’. In fact, Valerian's campaign was as successful as that of Peter I in 1722, but ‘had no more influence on the future of the Caucasus’ than its predecessor. Between May and November 1796 the Russians seized Darband after bombarding the fortress and the town, and moved on to subdue Kuba, Baku, Shaki and even Karabagh and Ganja. Fortunately Shah Agha Muhammad was busy reasserting his power in Khorasan, so that the invaders met little organized opposition. When news of Catherine's death reached the Russians, the whole expedition was abandoned and they withdrew, having achieved nothing.[127]

[1] Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, p. 313.

[2] M. T. Florinsky, *Russia: a History and an Interpretation*, 2 vols., New York, 1953, vol. I, p. 335.

[3] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 163–4, 264.

[4] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 320–6, 336; V. O. Klyuchevskiy, *Sochineniya v vosmi tomakh*, Moscow, 1956–9, vol. IV, pp. 65–6.

[5] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, pp. 326–8, 335–55.

[6] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 343, 424–5; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 407–8; *Russko-Dagestanskiye otnosheniya v XVIII–nachale XIX v.: sbornik dokumentov*, edited by V. G. Hadzhiyev, Moscow, 1988, pp. 3–4.

[7] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, pp. 339–42; Klyuchevskiy, *Sochineniya*, vol. IV, pp. 56–7.

[8] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, pp. 342–3; R. W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Roumanians from Roman Times to the Completion of Unity*, Cambridge, 1934 [Archon reprint 1963], p. 96. For the text of the so-called ‘Will of Peter the Great’, see Sykes, *History of Persia*, vol. II, pp. 232, 244–6.

[9] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, pp. 343–4.

[10] *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 408–9; *Russko-daghestanskiye otnosheniya*, p. 4.

[11] Solovyov, *Istoriya Rossii*, vol. VI, pp. 289–94.

[12] See for instance J. Struys, *Les voyages de Jean Struys en Moscovie, en Tartarie, en Perse, aux Indes*, *etc*., Amsterdam, 1681, facing p. 1, map of the Caspian Sea, dated 1668, which shows soundings throughout the shallow northern lobe, while the larger and deeper southern lobe is unplumbed except near the coast. Despite the existence of this map showing the Caspian Sea correctly orientated north–south, most European maps before the nineteenth century (presumably copying Blaeu's great *Atlas of the World*) show the Caspian lying west–east, thus losing the Caucasus as an isthmus and squeezing eastern Georgia and Daghestan out of existence.

[13] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, pp. 352–4; Karimullin, *U istokov tatarskoy knigi*, p. 72; Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, p. 317.

[14] Hughes, *Russia*, pp. 311–12, 440; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 411; Klyuchevskiy, *Sochineniya*, vol. III, pp. 266–7.

[15] Roemer, ‘Safavid period’, pp. 268, 278, 288–9, 304–5, 310–12, 314–24.

[16] *Russko-Dagestanskiye otnosheniya*, p. 32. In an annotation here a communist editor asserts that the writer of

this document (Peter the Great!) was (unintelligently?) perpetuating a mistake in describing Daghestan and the Caspian provinces as ‘Persia’; he was not.

[17] Karimullin, *U istokov tatarskoy knigi*, pp. 68–80.

[18] *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 412–13. Part of the clumsy text of Peter's ‘manifesto’, addressed to ‘our most resplendent…great friend and neighbour’ the shah of Persia, and asserting that the losses of the peaceful Russian merchants in Shamakha amounted to 4 million rubles, is quoted in Russian in Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 167.

[19] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, p. 354; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 413.

[20] Adzhiyev, ‘I snova “kumyk o kumykakh”’, p. 91; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, p. 770; Hughes, *Russia*, pp. 57–9; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 251, 344–52, 354; Solovyov, *Istoriya Rossii*, vol. IV, pp. 376–86.

[21] Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 84, 250; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 349–50, 352–8; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 369, 374, 414, 418, 467; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 452; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 115, 141; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 167–70; *Kratkaya istoriya SSSR*, edited by I. I. Smirnov, *et al.*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1963, vol. I, p. 232.

[22] *Istoriya Daghestana*, vol. I, pp. 340–3; *Russko-Daghestanskiye otnosheniya*, pp. 4–5.

[23] For this neglect of Russia's south-eastern steppe frontier and its peoples, see Khodarkovskiy, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, pp. 2–4, etc.

[24] Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 19–20, 27–8, 48–51, 54–63, 72–3. At this time the Nogay Horde could put into the field c. 300,000 warriors, which suggests a total population of perhaps 1.4 million: *Istoriya Kazakstana*, p. 114.

[25] Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 33–4, 71, 73–4, 78–86, 89–107, 112–14, 121–2, 228–31; G. Veinstein, 'À l'arrière-plan de la conquête de Sibir: Moscou et la Grande Horde nogaye', in B. Chichlo, ed., *Sibérie II: questions sibériennes: histoire, cultures, littératures*, Paris, 1999, pp. 50–2.

[26] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, *Dopolnitelnyy tom* II, *Rossiya*: *Perepis naseleniya 1897*, pp. xi–xxii [hereafter Census 1897], pp. xii, xvii; *Narody sredney Azii i Kazakhstana*, vol. II, pp. 9–10. By 1979 the number of Nogays in Stavropol province was 22,979; by 1989 it had increased to 39,738.

[27] C. R. Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia*, London, 1968, pp. 3, 23–5, 50–8; R. Dawson, *Imperial China*, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp. 238–41; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIX, pp. 749–50, 808; *Istoriya Mongolskoy Narodnoy Respubliki*, 3rd, revised and enlarged edn, edited by A. P. Okladnikov, *et al.*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 18–19, 170, 179–86, 193, 586, 587; *Narody Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana*, vol. II, p. 331; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti SSSR*, 2 vols., edited by V. N. Belitser, *et al.*, Moscow, 1964, vol. II, p. 743; A. N. Nusupbekov, *et al.*, *Istoriya Kazakhzkoy SSR*, 5 vols.,

Alma-Ata, 1979, vol. II, pp. 179–81; Phillips, *Mongols*, pp. 140–1; G. G. Stratanovich and N. L. Zhukovskaya, ‘Kalmyki’, in R. G. Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya: istoriko-etnograficheskiye ocherki*, Moscow, 1985, p. 271; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, p. 195.

[28] Faulmann, *Das Buch der Schrift*, pp. 85, 115–16; *Istoriya Mongolskoy Narodnoy Respubliki*, pp. 116, 156–65, 200–1.

[29] Bawden, *Mongolia*, pp. 26–34; Herrmann, *China*, p. 37; *Istoriya Mongolskoy Narodnoy Respubliki*, pp. 190–1, 200–10; *Istoriya Sibiri*, vol. II, pp. 105–6; Stratanovich and Zhukovskaya, ‘Kalmyki’, p. 273; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, pp. 196–7. *Bandida* is the Mongol form of Sanskrit *pandita*; cf. ‘pundit’.

[30] A. Bormanshinov, ‘Kalmyk pilgrims to Tibet and Mongolia’, *Central Asiatic Journal*, 1998, 42, 1, pp. 1–2.

[31] B. Dzhimbinov, *Sovetskaya Kalmykiya*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 7–10; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, p. 58; *Istoriya Sibiri*, vol. II, pp. 36–7; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 743; Nusupbekov, *Istoriya Kazakhzkoy SSR*, vol. II, p. 287.

[32] From here onward the name ‘Kalmyks’ will be used for the Oirats living between the Yaik and the Volga and (sporadically) subject to Russia, and ‘Oirats’ for the main body of the western Mongols in Dzungaria, although these are synonyms for the same people.

[33] Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 120–1; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 743; D. Schorkowitz, *Die soziale und politische Organisation bei den Kalmücken*

(Oiraten) und Prozesse der Akkulturation vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts, Frankfurt am Main, 1992, pp. 143–4; Stratanovich and Zhukovskaya, 'Kalmyki', p. 275.

[34] Dzhimbinov, *Sovetskaya Kalmykiya*, p. 7; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, p. 363; vol. XIV, p. 58; Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 114–16, 120–2; Nusupbekov, *Istoriya Kazakhzkoy SSR*, vol. II, pp. 287–8; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, edited by L. N. Krivoshein, *et al.*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1967–70, vol. I, pp. 80–4; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 141–2; Stratanovich and Zhukovskaya, 'Kalmyki', pp. 274–5, 363; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, p. 195.

[35] Dzhimbinov, *Sovetskaya Kalmykiya*, p. 7; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, p. 363; vol. XIV, p. 58; Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, p. 134; Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 114–16, 120–2; Nusupbekov, *Istoriya Kazakhzkoy SSR*, vol. II, pp. 287–8; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, vol. I, pp. 80–4; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 141–2; Stratanovich and Zhukovskaya, 'Kalmyki', pp. 274–5, 363; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, p. 195.

[36] Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 116–18, 121–2, 124–6, 129.

[37] Bawden, *Mongolia*, pp. 50–1; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, p. 58; vol. XXXVIII, p. 808; Forsyth, *Peoples of Siberia*, pp. 125–7; *Istoriya Sibiri*, vol. II, pp. 38, 44–5; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, vol. I, p. 129; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 145–6; P. A. Slovtsov, *Istoricheskoye obozreniye Sibiri*, St Petersburg,

1886, p. 66; Solovyov, *Istoriya Rossii*, vol. VI, pp. 581, 585; vol. VII, p. 235; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, p. 19.

[38] Such an agreement with any native people into whose territory they were advancing was called by the Russians a *shert* – the Arabic word *shart/shert* ?◦?? 'condition, agreement' used in Persia and Turkic-speaking countries and adopted by the Russians through the Tatars.

[39] *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, vol. I, p. 130.

[40] Bronevskiy, *Istoriya Donskogo Voyska*, pt. 3, pp. 69, 73, 77–80, cited in Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 203–4; L. S. Burchinova, 'Kalmykiya v sisteme gosudarstvennogo upravleniya Rossii', in U. E. Erdniyev, ed., *Dobrovolnoye vkhozhdeniye kalmytskogo naroda v sostav Rossii: istoricheskiye korni i znacheniye*, Elista, 1985, p. 48; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, vol. I, pp. 125–7; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 164–83; K. P. Shovunov, 'Kalmyki v sisteme voyennoy organizatsii Rossii XVIII veka', in Erdniyev, ed., *Dobrovolnoye vkhozhdeniye kalmytskogo naroda*, p. 44; Stratanovich and Zhukovskaya, 'Kalmyki', p. 275.

[41] M. Khodarkovsky, 'Kalmyk–Russian relations 1670–1697: development of a pattern of relations between nomadic and sedentary societies', *Central Asian Survey*, 1983, 2, 3, pp. 5, 7–10.

[42] Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 201, 203, 210–11; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', p. 44.

[43] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, p. 59; Khodarkovsky, 'Kalmyk–Russian relations', pp. 11–12, 14–18, 20–3.

[44] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, pp. 58–9; V. M. Kabuzan, *Narody Rossii v pervoy polovine XIX v.*, Moscow, 1992, p. 201; Khodarkovsky, 'Kalmyk–Russian relations', pp. 23–4; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 203–4; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', pp. 40–2.

[45] Burchinova, 'Kalmykiya', p. 49; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, p. 59; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 179–82; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki voyennoy', pp. 40–1; A. I. Timofeyev, ed., *Pamyatniki sibirskoy istorii XVIII veka*, 2 vols., St Petersburg, 1882–5, vol. I, p. 494.

[46] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, pp. 59–60; M. Khodarkovsky, 'Of Russian governors and Kalmyk chiefs, or the politics of the steppe frontier in the 1720s–1730s', *Central Asian Survey*, 1992, 11, 2, pp. 1–6; Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 170; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 744; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', p. 41.

[47] Burchinova, 'Kalmykiya', p. 49; Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, p. 375; Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 170; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 202–3, 210, 219; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', p. 44.

[48] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, p. 60; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 744; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', p. 42.

[49] Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 203–4, 210–11, 219–22; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', pp. 42, 44.

[50] Tien-fong Cheng, *History of Sino-Soviet Relations*, Washington, DC, 1957, p. 41; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, pp. 57, 60; vol. XIX, p. 751; vol. XXXVIII, p. 809; Fu Lo-shu, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations*, 2 vols., Tucson, 1966, vol. I, pp. 207–9, 210, 213, 228–30, 233–40; vol. II, 541–2, 550; B. P. Gurevich, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya v Tsentralnoy Azii v XVII–perroy polovine XIX v.*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 93–120; S. S. Shashkov, *Istoricheskiye etyudy*, St Petersburg, 1872, pp. 129–32; Timofeyev, *Pamyatniki*, vol. II, pp. 396, 434.

[51] This khan's name occurs in Russian texts as 'Ubushi' or 'Ubashi', but the accepted form in modern Kalmyk is 'Ubsh': A. V. Superanskaya, *Spravochnik lichnykh imyon narodov RSFSR*, 2nd edn, Moscow, 1979, pp. 230–1, 246.

[52] Burchinova, 'Kalmykiya', p. 50; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, p. 60.

[53] The Russian cavalry's strength on the eve of war was 39,546 regulars and 36,000 irregulars, the latter including: 9,000 Don Cossacks, 5,000 Sloboda Cossacks, 1,500 Kazan Tatars, Meshcheryaks and Bashkirs, and 9,360 Kalmyks (from three hosts). The number sent to the Prussian front was '4,000 Kalmyks and 1,200 Kalmyk Cossacks': Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', pp. 42–3.

[54] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, p. 60; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, p. 222; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', pp. 43, 46.

[55] *Cambridge History of China*, vol. X, *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, Part 1, edited by D. Twitchett and J. K. Fairbank,

Cambridge, 1978, p. 278; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIV, pp. 57–8, 61; Fu, *Documentary Chronicle*, pp. 253–66; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 742; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 200, 222–5; Stratanovich and Zhukovskaya, 'Kalmyki', p. 278.

[56] Burchinova, 'Kalmykiya', pp. 50–1; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 198, 201, 203, 217; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 212–14, 247–8; Shovunov, 'Kalmyki', p. 43.

[57] Burchinova, 'Kalmykiya', p. 51; Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 204, 208, 249–50.

[58] Schorkowitz, *Soziale und politische Organisation*, pp. 250–5.

[59] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 208.

[60] Fisher, *Russian Annexation*, p. 144.

[61] *Ibid*., pp. 36, 74, 121–2, 124, 144–5; Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 131–41, 166–9, 174, 178, 189–90, 196–7, 212–23, 227; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 143–8.

[62] Kochekayev, *Nogaysko-russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 242, 244.

[63] *Ibid*., pp. 229–59, 263–4.

[64] M. Arkas, *Istoriya Ukraïïny–Rusi: z 210 malyunkamy i portretamy ta 9 kartamy*, St Petersburg, 1908, p. 300, maps as folded supplement; Doroshenko, *History*, p. 452; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, pp. 151–2, 165–6.

[65] Arkas, *Istoriya Ukraïïny–Rusi*, pp. 356–7; Doroshenko, *History*, p. 496; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, pp. 187, 192–3.

[66] Fisher, *Russian Annexation*, p. 109; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 146; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, pp. 175–6.

[67] Fisher, *Russian Annexation*, pp. 41–3, 46–9, 138; Koch, Crimea, p. 53; Kochekayev, *Nogaysko–russkiye otnosheniya*, pp. 168–96.

[68] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, vol. XXX, col. 411; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 407–11, 426–33; Namitok, '"Voluntary" adherence of Kabarda', p. 25; Traho, 'Circassians', p. 19.

[69] *Akty Kavkazskoy arkheograficheskoy komissii*, vol. XII, Tiflis, 1904, no. 583, quoted by K. F. Dzamikhov, 'Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy v kontse XVIII–pervoy polovine XIX veka', in R. H. Gugov, *et al.*, eds., *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba narodov Severnogo Kavkaza i problemy mukhadzirstva: materialy Vsesoyuznoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii 24–26 oktyabrya 1990 g.*, Nalchik, 1994, p. 110.

[70] Dzamikhov, 'Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy', p. 113; Namitok, '"Voluntary" adherence of Kabarda', pp. 25–8; Traho, 'Circassians', pp. 20–1.

[71] Beslaneyev, *Malaya Kabarda*, pp. 57–8; *Bolshaya Sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, vol. XXX, col. 411; Dzamikhov, 'Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy', pp. 111–12; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XV, p. 587; Namitok, '"Voluntary" adherence of Kabarda', p. 28; Traho, 'Circassians', pp. 19–21.

[72] *Utverzhdeniye russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze*, Tiflis, 1904, vol. III, part 1, p. 32, quoted by Dzamikhov, 'Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy', pp. 111–12.

[73] Dzamikhov, 'Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy', pp. 112–13; Namitok, '"Voluntary" adherence of Kabarda', pp. 28–9; Traho, 'Circassians', pp. 21–2.

[74] Botsvadze, *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza*, pp. 52–3, 63–6; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. IX, pp. 585–6; vol. XV, pp. 585, 587–9; vol. XXI, p. 395; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, p. 393; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 373–4, 417, 435, 441–3, 450–1, 462–3; *Kratkaya istoriya SSSR*, vol. I, p. 242.

[75] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 340–1.

[76] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 164; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 167–8; *Russko-dagestanskiye otnosheniya*, p. 4; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 340–1; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 409–11.

[77] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 166; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], p. 410.

[78] This, presumably, explains why Peter in his letter of July 1722 to his ambassador in Persia says, ‘Explain to the old shah or the new shah, or whoever you can find there…’: *Russko-Dagestanskiye otnosheniya*, p. 32.

[79] Roemer, ‘The Safavid period’, pp. 304–28.

[80] F. M. Aliyev, *Antiiranskiye vystupleniya i borba protiv turetskoy okkupatsii v Azerbaydzhane v pervoy polovine XVIII v.*, Baku, 1986, p. 34, cited in Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 166, 454.

[81] G. Mamedova, *Russkiye konsuly ob Azerbaydzhane (20–60-e gody XVIII veka)*, Baku, 1989, pp. 29–31.

[82] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 167–72; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 412–15; *Russko-Dagestanskiye otnosheniya*, pp. 30–1.

[83] Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 86–9, 250; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 355–83; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 418–26.

[84] B. M. Atayev, *Avartsy: istoriya, yazyk, pismennost*, Makhachkala, 1996, pp. 35–6.

[85] Allen, *History of Georgian People*, pp. 198–200, 215; Botsvadze, *Narody Severnogo Kavkaza*, p. 50; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XII, p. 167; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 383–5; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 105, 109–11, 115, 154, 188, 191, 193, 195–6, 206; Vakhushti

Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, pp. 105–9, 113, 117–18, 121, 159, 162–9, 171, 173–5.

[86] *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 286–8, 292–3, 299–301.

[87] *Ibid*., [vol. I], pp. 399–400.

[88] V. V. Bartold, ‘Dāghistān’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. II, p. 87; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 493–5.

[89] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. II, pp. 86–7; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 156–60, 164–5, 181–6, 195–200.

[90] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, pp. 307–8. Recorded statistics probably counted males only, and must be multiplied by two; on this basis estimates for the late nineteenth century produce a total of more than 900,000: *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. X, 1893, pp. 26–32.

[91] Maps accompanying communist textbooks of the history of the USSR showed a band of territory some 60 miles wide all round the west and south ends of the Caspian notionally annexed to the Russian Empire by the 1723 treaty with Persia but relinquished to Persia in 1732.

[92] A. N. Guliyev, ‘Azerbaidzhantsy: istoricheskiy ocherk’, in *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 47.

[93] *Ibid*., pp. 47–8.

[94] Z. Safa, ‘Persian literature in the Timurid and Türkmen periods’, pp. 914, 917, 921, and ‘Persian literature in the Safavid period’, pp. 949–52, 960, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI. See also A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 221–3.

[95] The first printed books in Georgian, including a Georgian–Italian dictionary, were produced in Rome by a Georgian diplomat in 1626–70. The exiled King Archil, assisted by a Dutch diplomat, had the Book of Psalms printed in Moscow in 1705; and a press working in Tbilisi from 1709 produced not only various religious texts, but also the first printed edition of Rustaveli's *Man in the Tiger-skin* (1712): Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 130–6.

[96] Baramidze, *et al.*, *Istoriya gruzinskoy literatury*, pp. 95–6; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 80–2, 105–10, 114–15, 119–20.

[97] This was not published until the nineteenth century, and then incompletely: the section dealing with geography appeared, along with a French translation in 1842, followed in 1854 and 1885 by the Georgian text of the history. The first edition of the whole history in Russian translation was published in 1976: Vakhushti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*; Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 372, 379; Berdzenishvili, et al., Istoriya Gruzii, vol. I, pp. 328–9, 347–52, 357; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 126–8.

[98] Toumanoff, *Studies*, p. 80.

[99] Vakhusti Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, p. 339.

[100] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 147–8.

[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 148–53.

[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 188–9, 192–3. The Mongol census figure of five million for Georgia in the thirteenth century, defended by Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 284–5, has been dismissed as 'absurd': C. McEvedy and R. Jones, *Atlas of World Population History*, Harmondsworth, 1978, p. 158.

[103] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 154–5.

[104] Different explanations of Nadir's reward to Teimuraz and Erekle are advanced by various historians: Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 193; D. Bagrationi, *Istoriya*, ff. 283r–285r (pp. 155–6); Suny, *Making*, p. 55.

[105] Evliya Chelebi, *Kniga puteshestviya*, Part 3, pp. 10–12, 33, 43, 51–2, 185, 222.

[106] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 155–6.

[107] *Ibid.*, pp. 155–7.

[108] One study mentions seventeen Azerbaijani khanates in the middle of the eighteenth century, although only fifteen are explicitly listed: A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 247.

[109] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, p. 771; vol. XXXIX, pp. 460–1; G. R. G. Hambly, 'Āghā Muhammad Khān and the establishment of the Qājār dynasty', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, p. 126; Hambly, 'Iran during the reigns of Fath ᶜAlī Shāh and Muhammad Shāh', *Ibid.*, pp. 145–6;

Haxthausen, Transcaucasia, pp. 90, 93, 96–7, 117; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 71–4; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 183–4, 187–8.

[110] Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. II, p. 427.

[111] *Census*, 1897, p. xii; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, p. 124.

[112] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 205.

[113] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 185; A. N. Khachatryan, *Armyanskoye voysko v XVIII v.: iz istorii armyano-russkogo voyennogo sodruzhestva: issledovaniya i dokumenty*, Yerevan, 1968, pp. 6, 8, 10, 12, 94. See Chapter 5 for *melik*s.

[114] Evliya Chelebi, *Kniga puteshestviya*, vol. III, pp. 9–10, 185; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 31–43; Vakhushti, *Istoriya*, pp. 51, 64, 91, 96, 99; Suny, *Making*, p. xiv.

[115] G. F. Tanturov, *Ot Tiflisa do Parizha (svet i teni zhiznennogo puti)*, Paris, 1976, pp. 87–9; L. N. Tolstoy, *Hajji Murat*, ch. 24. See also Alexander Pushkin's contrast between the Russian government's savage treatment of prisoners during the 1741 Bashkir revolt and 'the gentle reign of Emperor Alexander' in *The Captain's Daughter*, ch. 6.

[116] B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, London, new edn, 1961, p. 514.

[117] Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 130–1; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 174–5.

[118] See the fine complete reproduction of his work: de Castelli, *Relazione e album dei schizzi sulla Giorgia del secolo XVII*.

[119] Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, eds., *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, p. 327.

[120] See S. V. Utechin, *Russian Political Thought: a Concise History*, 1963, pp. 43–67.

[121] D. Bagrationi, Istoriya Gruzii, fols. 322r, 324r, 352r, 353v, 354r (pp. 169–70, 181–2).

[122] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, pp. 196–7, 199–200, 201–2; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 171, 179–82, 188; R. G. Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington, 1993, pp. 34, 55–6.

[123] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, pp. 511–13; D. S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature*, edited and abridged by F. J. Whitfield, London, 1968, p. 56.

[124] Listed by Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, p. 507.

[125] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 509, 527–8.

[126] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 540–1.

[127] J. F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, with maps, plans, and illustrations, London, 1908, pp. 56–9; Sykes, *History of Persia*, vol. II, p. 294.

9 Russia's conquest of the Caucasus

Russian nationalist ideology and the Caucasus

At the end of the eighteenth century the Caucasus was about to be annexed to the Russian Empire, as so much of northern Eurasia had been during the preceding 1,000 years.[1] In the process Russia's ruling class and Orthodox citizens had formulated an imperial ideology based on medieval religious antagonisms: on the one hand towards Roman Catholics of the German and Austrian Empires and Poland, and on the other, towards Muslim 'Tatars' of the middle Volga, Caucasus and Central Asian steppes. The early conflict between Catholic Rome and Orthodox Constantinople over universal religious authority was intensified by the Great Schism (1054), while the Seljuq victory over Byzantium at Manazkert in Armenia (1071) and the conquest of Constantinople by the Frankish crusaders (1203) began a decline in its political power culminating in its final downfall and the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.

Out of this arose Moscow's self-designation as the 'Third Rome', the metropolis of universal Christendom: the first Rome, having betrayed true Christianity, had been overrun by the 'barbarians' in the fifth century; the second, Constantinople, for its sins had been conquered by the Turks in 1453 and turned into the new capital of Islam, Istanbul; so Moscow, 'the capital of the only truly Christian sovereign', now stood as the third Rome – 'and a fourth there will not be'.[2] So declared the sixteenth-century abbot of a monastery in Pskov, but Grand Prince Ivan III (1440–1505) had anticipated this new doctrine when he adopted the title ‘Tsar’, i.e. ‘Caesar’ – thus claiming the authority of the universal emperor of Christendom, like the German emperors before him, and those of the Byzantine Empire before that. This became the national myth of ‘Holy Russia’, with the assumption of enormous status in the world. Even Peter I did not break with this assumption, but strengthened it by his obsession with empire – which remained the main preoccupation of all subsequent Russian rulers. The next innovative monarch – Catherine II – despite her up-to-date rationalism and her German origins, contributed to the Russian chauvinist identity with her projection of Russia's ‘historical role’ as protector of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and her ‘Greek Project’ of recovering Constantinople from the Turks and making it the centre of a new Orthodox empire – which became the dream of Russian nationalists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Even Russia's ‘enlightened’ freethinkers, the Romantic anti-tsarist generation of the Decembrist rebels (especially Colonel P. I. Pestel) preached Russian imperialism founded on the supposed racial superiority of the Russian people and a particular hatred of Gypsies and Jews – so that in several respects they were forerunners of Germany's national socialists. Pestel saw the Caucasus as a beautiful land in the hands of ‘semi-savage peoples’ incapable of defending their own independence – and therefore having no right to independence. All Caucasian peoples (Pestel makes no exception for Orthodox Georgia) are equally given to ‘turbulence and robbery’, and either they must become ‘pacified’ or, having proved ‘ungovernable’, must be deported and scattered throughout Russia's empire – their place being taken by settlers from Russia proper, among whom the lands of these exiles would be shared out. All signs of these former inhabitants should be wiped out, in the interests of the ‘complete homogeneity’ essential for Russia's wellbeing.[3] (By the end of the nineteenth century expulsion of the indigenous population on precisely this basis would indeed be effected in Circassia and Abkhazia.) On a simpler level, the writer Mikhail Lermontov illustrated the typical Russian's contempt for non-Russians in his seasoned captain on the Caucasus front, with his brusque explanation of the obtuseness of the natives – ‘they're Asiatics’.[4] The next generation of Russian intellectuals was no better: Slavophiles such as N. Ya. Danilevskiy and F. M. Dostoyevskiy were typical of their time in believing in ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ races, Russia's ‘destiny’ and its ‘civilizing mission’.[5]

The Russian people were, of course, not alone in their racist attitudes, which in the nineteenth century were rife throughout civilized Europe, but the Russian state stood out in its explicit legislative hierarchy and chauvinism. The Russian people itself was rigidly docketed in separate classes, from nobility to serfs, with additional castes – the clergy, the merchantry, the military and the Cossacks. Religion and marriage too were subject to rigid regulations. The general principle that ‘Russian’ and ‘Orthodox’ were synonymous arrogated extraordinary status to the Orthodox Church: only those of Orthodox faith were truly Russian, and many laws discriminated against non-Orthodox Christians as well as non-Christians. Religious conversion was one-way only: people of all creeds were free to convert ‘upwards’ into the Orthodox Church, but no one who had been born into Orthodoxy or converted to it might change ‘downwards’. The next category below Orthodoxy constituted other Christian religions: Catholics, Armenian Gregorians, Lutherans, etc. Not only the Orthodox but all Christians were forbidden to convert to any non-Christian faith, except by permission of the Ministry of the Interior. ‘Lower’ still, Muslims, Jews and Buddhists were, like non-Orthodox Christians, allowed to profess their own religion but not to propagate it, and (apart from Jews) could not move to any non-Orthodox church without special permission from the Foreign Ministry.[6] In the 'lowest' category, 'pagans' (Animists of the North, Siberia and, to some extent, Caucasia) must be converted, but only to Orthodoxy. Nobody was permitted not to profess any religion at all, so that atheism was a crime.[7]

Sexual relations too were subject to the laws concerned with religion, and their regulation was enforced by the clergy. A Christian was forbidden to marry a pagan, and all Christians except Lutherans were forbidden to marry Jews or Muslims.[8] Any attempts by adherents of religions other than Orthodoxy to proselytize were treated as 'religious crimes' leading to imprisonment, as were adherence to certain sects and apostasy from the Orthodox Church. These rules were somewhat relaxed by a law on religious tolerance passed in April 1905,[9] but right up to the 1917 revolution the Russian Orthodox Church remained the exclusive religion of the state, the Russian people and the Russian Empire. This was clearly not a comfortable context for believers in other faiths – or even, as we shall see, for the Orthodox Church of Georgia as distinct from Russia – but was especially problematic for Muslims.

Russia's annexation of Georgia, 1774–1822

In Georgia, King Vakhtang VI's attempt at rapprochement with Russia was repeated with greater success when, after Turkey's defeat in the 1768–74 war against Russia (including the fiasco of a brief Russian campaign in Georgia) King Erekle II of Kartli-Kakheti accepted the protection of the Russian empress, who by the Treaty of Georgiyevsk (1783) gave him assurances of territorial autonomy and recognition of the independent status of the Georgian Orthodox Church. However, Russia's role as protector proved a dead letter in 1795 when Shah Agha Muhammad invaded Georgia and ravaged Tbilisi ferociously. As the mountain passes were too hazardous for the Russians, they sent no troops to defend their ‘protectorate’, leaving it at the mercy of the shah until his death in 1797. Two years later, however, the Darial Gorge route was opened up by the Russians’ construction of the Georgian Military Road from Vladikavkaz to Tbilisi.

Meanwhile King Giorgi XII of Kartli-Kakheti died, and Georgia relapsed into internecine squabbles, so that when Russian power was reasserted in 1801 Tsar Alexander I was persuaded to ignore previous promises and moral scruples, and declared the outright annexation of Georgia. The Russian military commander in Tbilisi coolly announced that the Georgian throne would remain empty, the Georgian nobility were forced to swear allegiance to the tsar, and the systematic subjugation of the country was entrusted to a Russified Georgian, P. Tsitsishvili (‘Tsitsianov’ in Russian), on whose recommendation the Bagratid monarchy was abolished and nearly all members of the royal family were exiled to Russia. Even the autocephalic Georgian Orthodox Church (much older than that of Russia) – whose ‘inviolability…had been guaranteed by each Russian autocrat from Catherine the Great onwards’[10] – was deprived of its catholicos in 1811, then practically abolished by being subordinated to the Russian Church as an exarchate in 1817. The Georgian liturgy was replaced by services in Church Slavonic, which was incomprehensible to most Georgians.[11]

Paradoxically, in addition to Georgia's vulnerability to Persian invasion and Daghestani raids, another justification advanced by the Russians for their coup d'état and dishonourable treatment of Georgia's rulers was the latters' 'propensity for intrigue and internecine feuding' – ignoring the fact that in Russia itself Emperor Paul I had recently been murdered with the complicity of his brother, who now reigned as Alexander I. Thus it can scarcely be maintained that the members of the royal family deported by force to Russia were treated 'generously and honourably', simply because they were given pensions and 'every encouragement…to enter…service in the Russian army and administration'.[12] The landowning gentry was a different matter: as the tsars were accustomed to employing the Russian gentry as administrators of the peasantry, they found it advantageous in colonial territories to leave in place the landowning class – of whichever religion – to maintain order locally, their loyalty being rewarded by opportunities in the tsar's army or administration, and possibly a place among the Russian nobility.[13]

Only the east Georgian principalities (Kartli and Kakheti) were annexed at first, because all of western Georgia was still within the Ottoman Empire, just as Shirvan, Azerbaijan and eastern Armenia lay within the shah's domains. Wars waged by Russia against Turkey and Persia between 1804 and 1829 gradually forced them to relinquish their Caucasian territories north of the Araxes, so that one by one, between 1803 and 1810, Megrelia, Guria, Imereti and Abkhazia were also occupied and their rulers forced to submit to St Petersburg. In south-west Georgia the Muslim Georgians of Meskheti were designated 'Turks' by the Russians in 1810, so that their gentry lost their rights of citizenship, and many of those who rejected Christianity moved to Turkey. As even those who remained in Georgia suffered discrimination, e.g. by exclusion from Russian schools, they sent their sons to be educated in Turkey, so that, ‘Not surprisingly…Georgian Muslims became more and more Turkified.’[14]

Understandably, not all Georgians could reconcile themselves to Russian occupation, so that some nobles took service with the Persians in their wars against Russia. Of the principalities, Imereti held out longest, with armed uprisings in 1809–10 (under King Solomon II) and 1820–2 – the latter revolt, in protest against the Russification of the Georgian Church, involving also the Megrelians, Gurians and Abkhazians. In eastern Georgia a revolt that began in 1812 among peasants of Ḳakheti who had been conscripted to transport supplies in the war against Persia spread to the neighbouring Georgian mountain tribes – Khevsurs and Kists (Ingush) – before it was crushed by a punitive expedition which ‘destroyed all enemy settlements lying in its path’.[15] Such ‘pacification’ by violence was regular Russian practice in North Caucasus.[16]

Russia's Orthodox Christianization campaign and Osetia

St Petersburg revealed its intentions towards non-Christians in the Caucasus with a campaign of conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church, just as the state church had long employed missions against Animism and Islam in the Volga–Ural region. Tbilisi and Mozdok had become missionary centres for the North Caucasus in the eighteenth century. Here the persecution of Islam could be presented as the reconversion of peoples who had previously been Christian but subsequently adopted Islam – the only significant exception being the Osetians, half of whom were Christian in the eighteenth century. The undermining of Islam by Christianization was suggested by exiled Georgian Orthodox clergy, and in 1745 the Russians established a mission on the river Fiagdon – staffed by Georgian priests – to convert the Osetian Muslims. After destruction by an Osetian lord, this mission was moved to Mozdok, where over 20 years it produced thousands of converts, mainly the sons of clan elders. Another college was founded in Georgia in the eighteenth century for training missionaries, who worked among the Osetians, Ingush, Circassians and Daghestanis until Georgia was overrun by Persia and Turkey. When Russian missionary activity was renewed in 1815 the Osetians were again specially targeted by the 'Osetian Commission' in Tbilisi, with its staff of clerics, mountain guides and Cossacks. This mission functioned until 1860, when it was replaced by the 'Society for the Re-establishment of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus', with the task of 'pacifying the population and inculcating Christian culture' among the southern Osetians, the Georgian Muslims of Acharia, Megrelia, Abkhazia and the Azerbaijan border, and the Animist mountain tribes of Svaneti and north-east Georgia. One practical benefit of missionary activity in Osetia was the building of a seminary at Ardon, with bursaries for native boys. Despite its aim of Russification this gave a few young natives an elementary education and acquaintance with Russian culture, which opened up opportunities to serve their own communities.[17]

Another consequence was that the production of Bibles and prayer-books led to a literacy campaign in the Osetian language. The first texts, however, were translations from Georgian, using the Georgian alphabet, while the first Osetian book published in Moscow (in 1798) was in the Church Slavonic alphabet. Russians assert that the latter book 'expressed the pro-Russian sympathies of the great majority of the Osetian people',[18] but the books in Georgian script suggest equally that the Georgians were pushing their influence in Osetia. Indeed, books in Osetian continued to be printed in the Georgian alphabet until 1830, and the supervisor of the Vladikavkaz Osetian seminary had the Georgian name Javalishvili.[19]

Because of their Christian leanings and strategic location astride the Darial pass, the Osetians played a key part in Russia's subjugation of the region, and were favoured accordingly. Russians had first visited Osetia in the early seventeenth century, and were warned by Kabardans that the Tagaur Osetians would make their journey across the pass to Georgia hazardous. In 1650, on the other hand, officials visiting Kabarda were informed by the Digors that all Osetians would gladly submit to the tsar if he would build a fort to protect them from the Kabardans. However, it was not until the 1760s that the Russians became more deeply involved in Osetia, because of their need for settlers to populate the frontier near Mozdok. The Kabardan lords of the Terek lowlands had excluded Osetians from the plain, but were now persuaded to allow them to move down from the mountains – after which many free Osetians became serfs of the Kabardans. The first penetration of Russian troops into mountainous Osetia occurred in 1769, when a detachment sent to assist the Georgians encountered difficulties in the Darial pass, which convinced St Petersburg that Osetia must be annexed. The Russians had also sent expeditions into the mountains to assess Osetia's mineral resources, and found much to interest them. The Treaty of Küchük Kainarji ending the war against Turkey in 1774 allowed Russia to annex Kabarda and lay claim to Osetia, many of whose communities willingly swore loyalty to Russia. Thereafter Osetian leaders were seduced into adopting Christianity by the offer of affiliation to the Russian nobility, and all received state salaries – albeit at the price of giving their sons as hostages to be held captive in Russian forts. As Osetian chiefs who submitted to Russia were ‘given’ land (within their own country) and thus became Russian gentry, their peasants were reduced to the same status as Russian serfs.[20]

Not all Osetians were pleased to become Russian citizens – especially the Tagaur chiefs who, resenting their loss of toll revenue on the Darial road (and other sums extorted from travellers), staged revolts in 1769 and 1785–91. The latter rebellion coincided with Sheykh Mansur's proselytism of Islam in North Caucasus, during which his principal Turcophile supporter in Osetia, ᶜAḥmad Dudarov of Chmi, built a mosque in Tagauria. As a punishment for his ‘treachery’ Russian soldiers burned down Chmi and killed its villagers. Dudarov's final uprising in 1804 was connected not only with Tagaur toll rights, but with Russia's violent subjugation of the south Osetians, who had naively believed that, since Russia had annexed Georgia and displaced its princes, the Osetians would cease to be serfs. In fact, Russian punitive campaigns were launched against them, and south Osetia remained in a state of turmoil until mid-century. Serious fighting also took place along the Russian Military Road where, in protest against forced labour on snow-clearing, Osetians attacked Russian forts. Most resettlement of Osetians from the mountains to the plain occurred in the 1820s–40s, and as this was supervised by the Russian military authorities responsible for subjugating the Caucasus, there were numerous protests and revolts both north and south of the mountains, which the Russians crushed with typical brutality – villages were destroyed and men sent to prison in Siberia. Further conflict over land and forest rights ensued after the foundation of Cossack villages in lowland areas belonging to Osetians, who were transferred to the less fertile north bank of the middle Terek. Natives living there (especially Muslims) became victims of habitual racial insult and abuse at the hands of the Russian Cossacks. In any case there was much cause for disagreement over land, since the traditional rights assumed by Kabardan and Osetian Digor (Muslim) chiefs conflicted with the demand by Osetian peasants transferred from the mountains (usually Christians or Animists) for possession of their own farms free from feudal dependency. A big wave of peasant unrest in Digoria in the 1850s predisposed the St Petersburg government to bring about the 'liberation' of the Osetian peasants from serfdom on unfavourable terms similar to those applied in Russia in 1861.[21]

In general, however, the Russian authorities found the Osetians placid and co-operative; Christian Osetians were the mountain people most friendly towards Russia, and they proved very useful as soldiers, serving, for instance, in Russia's wars against Turkey and Sweden. By the 1860s there was an Osetian general in the Russian imperial army, and during the 1877–8 Russo-Turkish war an Osetian division won distinction for its bravery. In addition to Osetia's strategic value, the mineral resources in its mountains were exploited by the Russians from 1850. Serf labour from the Urals and Ukraine was brought in to mine silver and lead ore at Sadon, high in the Ardon gorge among the Alagir Osetians. When the ore became less accessible, workings were leased in the 1890s to a Belgian firm, which constructed a processing plant at Vladikavkaz and exported lead ore abroad as well as supplying Baku's industrialists with sulphuric acid.[22]

Culturally, Osetia was quite advanced by 1900. This was the only part of North Caucasus where a system of Russian-language schools was created, including some for girls, and a few for Muslims.[23] As a contemporary reported,

> A considerable number of Osetians attend village schools and, in some cases, obtain secondary and higher (especially technical) education. Among the staff of the civil and military administration in the Caucasus there are several dozen Osetians, who are in no way inferior to their Russian colleagues. In recent years cultured Osetians have been very active in promoting the enlightenment of their compatriots by striving to eradicate harmful customs and superstitions.[24]

This indicates a level of secular culture distinguishing the Osetians from most of their neighbours. While other native peoples might make contributions to the local Russian-language press, which included a few short-lived newspapers for Circassians and one weekly in Arabic for Daghestan, up to 1917 only the Osetians produced four periodicals in their own language – albeit transient because of Russian censorship. Osetia was also the only north Caucasian country apart from Kabarda and Balkaria where an outstanding writer emerged among the native intelligentsia – Konstantin Khetagurov (1859–1906). Born into an impoverished chieftain's family in one of the remotest high valleys on the Georgian border, he was very active as a poet writing in both Osetian and Russian, and as a journalist contributing articles on current political and social issues, mainly to Caucasian Russian-language newspapers, which resulted in his being twice arrested and exiled from the Caucasus.[25]

Azerbaijan and Armenia, 1800–1840

While the Russians were consolidating their grip on western Georgia along the Black Sea coast and on the Kars plateau, against determined Turkish resistance, they had also been subjugating the Persian vassal khanates of Azerbaijan and eastern Armenia. Ganja was taken in 1804 (and renamed Yelizavetpol); Shirvan, Shaki and Karabagh submitted in the following year, and Baku, Kuba and Darband were subdued in 1806. When the Russian army advanced south as far as Lankaran the shah sued for peace, and Russia's possession of what became northern Azerbaijan was confirmed by the Treaty of Gülistan (1813). As in Georgia, the Russians undermined the native régimes by deposing the khans and replacing the khanates with Russian-style provinces. Some of the local beys and aghas became reconciled to Russian occupation and collaborated in forming military units, such as a 'Tatar' cavalry squadron from Gazakh, and the Karabagh regiment, which took part in the war against Turkey in 1828–9. As a result such Russified Azerbaijani surnames as Alikhanov, Nazirov and Taghirov appear among the officers of the Russian Imperial Army in the 1820s. A renewal of the war against Russia by Shah Fath-Ali in 1826–8 only resulted in his losing more territory: by the Treaty of Turkmanchai Yerevan and Nakhchavan were ceded to Russia, and direct Persian involvement north of the Araxes ended. From then onward this Turkic-speaking region of Persia was officially divided by the Araxes into a northern, 'Russian' half (the former Khanate of Shirvan) with Baku as its chief city, and a southern, Persian half – ancient Azerbaijan. One result of Russia's success in the wars of the early nineteenth century was the Armenians' acknowledgment of Russia as their liberator from Persia and Turkey, and the migration of thousands of Armenians into what was now 'Russian' territory – especially Karabagh and Nakhchavan. In 1829 an

Armenian national province was formed, combining the districts of Yerevan and Nakhchavan, but this was abolished ten years later.[26]

Resistance in Chechenia and Daghestan

Notwithstanding these successes on the Persian front, by the 1820s Russia's conquest of the Caucasus was hindered by the intense and sustained native resistance movement in Chechenia and Daghestan (in addition to the continuing Circassian war of resistance in the west). Russia's Caucasian War was intensified after the appointment in 1816 of General A. P. Yermolov as commander-in-chief, with his ruthless plan for subjugating ‘unsubmissive tribes’ by means of an army of 60,000 soldiers and 15,000 Cossacks of the North Caucasus line. The Russians’ arrogant belief in the glorious invincibility of their army at this time arose from their victories in the Napoleonic wars, the delusions of Alexander I as a Christian autocrat, and the Russian military's traditional contempt for non-Christian peoples as ‘savage tribes’. Resentment against Russian interference had been growing in Daghestan and Chechenia since 1794, when Catherine II sent troops to counteract Shah Agha Muhammad's pillaging of Georgia. Darband and Baku were captured before Tsar Paul countermanded his late mother's orders and cancelled the campaign, but when the Russians returned to Georgia in force in 1799, some Daghestani rulers – the Kumuk *shamkhal* of Tarki, the *utsmi* of Ḳaitag, the *ma^{c}sum* of Tabasaran, the khan of Darband, and the khan of Avaristan – were induced to submit to Russian ‘protection’. In 1803 Russia seized the southern frontier region of Jar-Balakan (Zakatala), through which many Daghestani raids on Georgia had been launched. The allegiance sworn by these rulers was as usual only provisional, and several of them defected at the start of the 1804–13 Russo-Persian War, only to resubmit in 1812 along with the khanates of Kürin, Kazikumukh and Dargo.[27]

The least submissive nation were the Chechens (the most numerous people in North Caucasus: 226,500 in 1897) who lived in the Terek plain and the forested foothills and mountains east of Vladikavkaz. Their name for themselves was not Chechen, but 'Nokhcho', and together with the Ingush and Batsbi they constituted the speakers of the distinct family of Vaynakh languages.[28] The Chechens and Ingush stood out from most other Caucasian peoples in the early nineteenth century because feudalism scarcely existed among them: they had no *bek*s, khans or princes themselves. However, most of the lower Terek valley was under the control of Kabardan feudal lords and was indeed known as 'Lesser Kabarda', while farther east the Chechens could not free themselves from the *shamkhal* of Tarki's exaction of tribute. Later in the century, after the end of Russia's Caucasus War, the tsarist government granted estates in the most fertile areas to military and civil administrators, Cossack and native mountain rulers – including some Chechen officers. Thus even among the Chechens a class of prosperous land- and herd-owners developed, while most ordinary tribespeople, especially in the mountains, suffered from extreme lack of land, and had to rent it from rich Cossacks. During the eighteenth century many Ingush and Chechens moved down from the mountains to the lowlands and foothills around the Sunzha and its tributaries, where life was easier:

> Each house commonly had its garden, or orchard, and round the aoul, in the forest clearing, stretched the cultivated fields, sown with maize, oats, barley, rye or millet…but, as the villages were unfortified, care was

> taken to keep one side ever in contact with the forest, whither at the first threat of danger the women and children fled with all portable wealth…As long as the forest stood the Tchetchens were unconquerable.[29]

Russian soldiers chose to profess that, unlike themselves, the Chechens and most other mountain peoples – although ‘alert in mind, brave…[and] honourable according to their own peculiar code’ – were nevertheless ‘cruel, treacherous and cunning…given only to robbery and murder’,[30] and respecting no laws but their own, and in 1818 Yermolov on this hearsay basis set out to crush them into submission by the Russian law of the cannon and the bayonet.[31] Russian forts, such as Vladikavkaz (1784), Stavropol (1785), Yekaterinodar (1793) and Groznyy (1818), had been built in the plain, wide clearings were cut through the forest to expose Chechen settlements, and dissension between the Chechens and their cousins the Ingush was provoked by moving the latter down from the mountains to near Nazran, where many Ingush collaborated with the Russians. Yermolov's savage bombardment of Chechen villages, his ruthless slaughter of their inhabitants and systematic destruction of their crops provoked fierce resistance not only in Chechenia, but also in Avaristan and other districts of Daghestan, despite Russian punitive raids.[32]

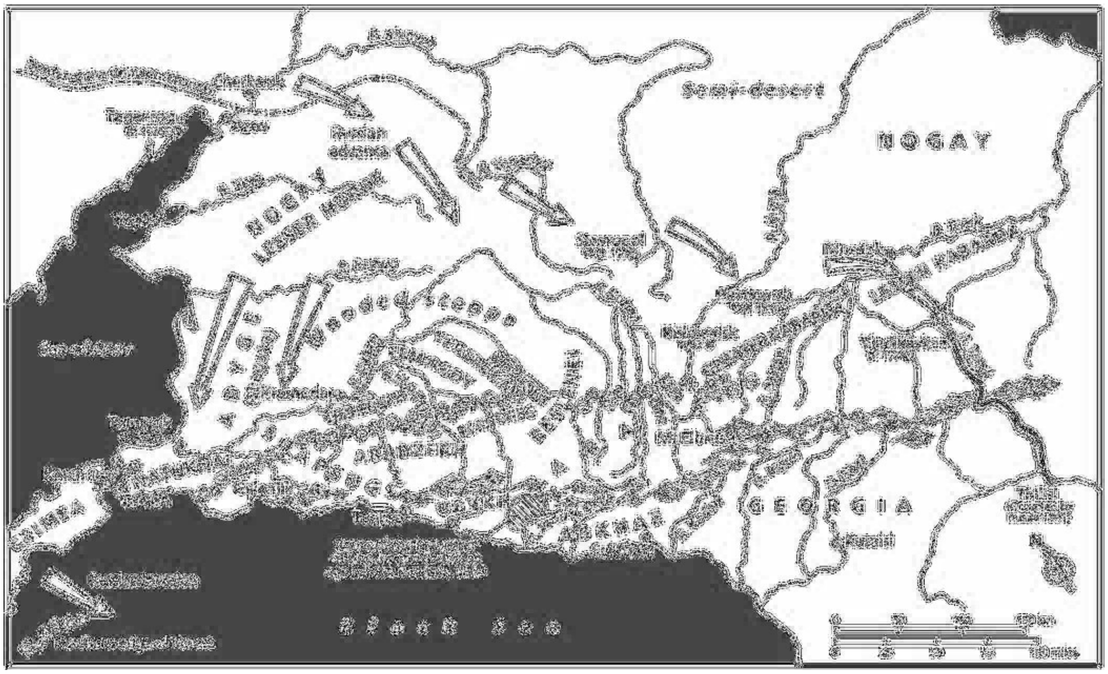
From about 1824 this self-defence movement became explicitly Islamic, with a call for militancy (*jihad*), the inspiration for which came from Sufism – the mystical school of Islam, based on brotherhoods in which disciples (*murid*s) followed the precepts of a master (*murshid*). Over the centuries the Sufis, associated with Shi^{c}ism and dedicated to missionary activity,[33] had produced innumerable sects. In the Caucasus it was the Naqshbandiya order from Turkestan which spread to Daghestan in the eighteenth century, while that of Kunta Hajji (Qadiriya) was adopted in Chechenia and Ingushia. The discipline of *murid*ism aimed to inspire selfless, puritanical dedication to Islam for *ghazawat* ('holy war') against its enemies. This ideal had first been propagated in Chechenia and Circassia during the 1780s by Sheykh Mansur, a Chechen imam who preached anti-Russian zeal; in the 1820s it was the Avar, Ghazi-Muhammad, who preached *jihad*, and for three years with his *murid*s led bands of Daghestanis against the Russians, until he was killed at the Avar village of Gimry in 1832. His place as imam was immediately filled by Ḥamzat-Bek, whose career was cut short by an act of blood-vengeance. Ḥamzat's successor was yet another Avar, Shamil[34] – the most famous leader of the *murid*s in their fight against the Russians' grim ferocity in Daghestan and Chechenia. As justly famed for his fierce courage as his predecessors, Shamil was also no less bigoted and cruel, punishing followers by death or mutilation on the slightest display of insubordination.[35]

After the death of Ḥamzat-Bek in 1834 the Russian generals thought the war was practically over, but within three years – despite the collaboration of most of the hereditary rulers with the Russians – Shamil held all Daghestan except Lezgistan and had created a theocratic state, the Imamate. Repercussions of his victories occurred widely, with anti-Russian uprisings in Kuba and Shaki, and even in Circassia, where his call for *jihad* was taken up. The Russians pursued Shamil mercilessly, so that in 1839, driven from his headquarters at Ahulgo, he had to move to Chechenia. The Chechens, unsubmissive as ever, responded to Shamil's call and inflicted a serious defeat on the Russians on the river Valerik in 1840,[36] and raided the Darial pass. By 1843 the *murid* forces' control of Chechenia and Avaristan allowed them to attack the Russian invaders throughout the

Caucasus, and even make a daring raid on Tsinandali in eastern Georgia in 1853.[37] Shamil's imamate reached its apogee about 1850, but the struggle could scarcely succeed because of the Russians’ overwhelming numbers, up-to-date weaponry and systematic ruthlessness. The peoples of Daghestan and Chechenia, however, possessed the moral superiority as defenders of their own land and, although some of them were coerced into following Shamil, they were generally freemen motivated by Islam and a desire to challenge the power of native rulers subservient to the Russians, such as the *shamkhal* of Tarki and the khans of Ghazikumukh and Avaristan.[38]

The Russian army (as distinct from the Cossack irregulars) was based on serfdom and a state system which took peasants from their villages to serve for 25 years under conditions similar to penal servitude, with brutal punishments for misdemeanours. Such troops were neither efficient nor dedicated, and could win battles only by sheer weight of numbers. However, the Russians’ disadvantage in mountain warfare was gradually overcome by driving new roads deep into the valleys of Chechenia and Daghestan, making it possible to take in artillery and destroy villages and defensive towers (the refuges of women and children) by bombardment. By these means they turned the tables on Shamil and isolated resistance in the valleys and hilltops of Avaristan. The Chechens were gradually forced out of the mountains on to the plain, and *murid*s defended to the death one stronghold after another. In 1859, however, Shamil himself was pinned down at Gunib and forced to surrender, then sent into exile in Russia.[39]

Even the fall of Gunib was not the end of mountain resistance: revolts flared up in Chechenia (1860, 1861, 1862, 1864), Avaristan (1861, 1863, 1866, 1871) and Kaitagh and Tabasaran (1866). In Zakatala district of Daghestan the Avars rebelled in 1863 because of Russian pressure to abjure Islam, while the neighbouring 'Ingilo' Georgians returned to Islam after having been Christian for 12 years.[40]


Cherkassk
Russian advance
NOGAY
LESSER HORDE
Wooded steppe
Sea of Azov
CRIMEA
Black Sea
Semi-desert
NOGAY
ABKHAZ
GEORGIA
Kutaisi
0 50 100 150 km
0 25 50 75 100 miles

Map 20 Circassia before the Russian conquest.

Altogether Russia's Caucasian War in Daghestan and Chechenia lasted about 53 years (1818–71), at enormous cost to both the native peoples and the Russian army. When it ended the native khanates were abolished, but many members of the ruling families in Daghestan, such as the Tarkovskiys, Kaplanovs, Temirovs and Alibekovs, continued to occupy influential positions in the Russian administration and the economy.[41]

The great Russian writer Lev Tolstoy spent some time as a junior officer on the Terek in 1851–4, and left a firsthand account of the local people – Chechens and Russian Cossacks – in his short novel *The Cossacks*:

> The part of the Terek line where the Greben Cossacks live is a monotonous landscape…The wide waters of the Terek, which separate the Cossacks from the highlanders, flow turbid but swift, smoothly depositing greyish sand on the low, reed-lined right bank, while scouring away the…steep left bank, which is clothed with the roots of ancient oaks, rotting plane-trees and sapling thickets. Native villages, pacified, but still restless, occupy the right bank, while Cossack *stanitsa*s [settlements] are spaced every four or five miles apart along the left bank about half a mile from the river… The *stanitsa*s are linked by a road running in a wide clearing through the forest from one Cossack post to the next, with observation towers where sentries keep watch…Beyond this mile-wide band of forest…begin the sandy hillocks of the Nogay, or Mozdok, steppe, which stretches God knows how far to the north…To the south of the Terek lie Greater Chechnya, the Black Hills…and finally the snow-capped mountains…The fertile, wooded expanse this side of the river…is home to the warlike, handsome and prosperous Russian Old Believer community known as Ridge [Greben] Cossacks [who]…living among the Chechens, have made mixed marriages and adopted the traditions, way of life and social code of the mountain people.

There was a legend among the Cossacks that in the sixteenth century Tsar Ivan the Terrible (in Russian *Ivan Groznyy* – hence, no doubt, the name of the Russian fort Groznyy, built in 1818) once visited the Terek, where he summoned the elders of the Greben Cossacks, granted them the land south of the river, exhorted them to live in peace and promised neither to subject them to his rule nor force them to abandon their Old Believer religion. So far as their Muslim neighbours were concerned,

> Up to the present day Cossack families consider themselves to be related to Chechen clans, and love of freedom, idleness, robbery and fighting are their main character traits…The Cossack feels more respect for the mountain desperado who has killed his brother than for the regular soldier billeted on him to guard the *stanitsa*, who fills his house with cigarette smoke…If a Cossack wants clothes to swagger in he adopts Chechen gear; he gets his finest weapons from the mountaineers, and it is also from them that he buys, or steals, his best horses…Nevertheless, this small Christian community, planted on a remote patch of land surrounded by half-wild Mahometan tribes and Russian soldiers, consider themselves to be on a higher level of culture, acknowledging only a Cossack as a human being, and regarding everyone else with contempt.[42]

Tolstoy depicts the typical behaviour of Chechen warriors in an episode when his autobiographical hero, a Russian cadet, joins a detachment of Cossacks on an early morning patrol:

> He ran out to the front door. ‘What's on? Where are you off to?’, Olenin asked, barely succeeding in getting the Cossacks to acknowledge his presence. ‘We're after some Chechen rebels[43] lurking out in the bush. We're just on our way but there aren't many of us about…’ Olenin felt it would look bad if he didn't join them…He dressed, loaded his gun, jumped on to a hastily saddled horse and caught up with the

Cossacks at the edge of the *stanitsa*. They had dismounted, and stood in a circle swigging red wine from a wooden cup which they passed round…They paid no attention to Olenin, but eventually the cornet, who was usually friendly towards him…told him, grudgingly, what their business was. A patrol sent out to look for rebels had discovered a small group of men from the mountains hiding among the tall grass about five miles from the *stanitsa*. They were crouching in a hollow, firing their guns and refusing to give themselves up alive. The corporal in charge of the three-man patrol had sent one Cossack back to the *stanitsa* for reinforcements, and stayed there with the other to guard the *abrek*s.

Reaching the place along with the relief party and coming under fire, Olenin saw the single Cossack sitting behind a sandhill reloading his gun to exchange fire with the *abrek*s behind another dune… Commandeering a Nogay hay-cart which stood nearby, the Cossacks began pushing it forward. Olenin climbed a higher sandhill and saw nine Chechens crouching in a row, knee to knee, not firing. All was quiet, then suddenly a strange, mournful song arose. The Chechens knew there was no escape, and to avoid the temptation of making a run for it, they had bound themselves together with straps, knee to knee, loaded their guns, and broken into a death-song… Suddenly this stopped; there was a sharp shot and a bullet slapped into the wooden body of the cart, accompanied by the Chechens' curses and howls. Shot followed shot, and bullet after bullet slapped into the cart behind which the slowly advancing Cossacks held their fire until they were no farther than five paces from them. A moment later the Cossacks, led by

> Lukashka, rushed out from both sides of the cart… Olenin heard a few shots, a yell and a groan… Lukashka, as white as a sheet, was holding one of the wounded Chechens and shouting: ‘Don't kill him. I’ll take him alive!’…Lukashka was twisting the Chechen's arms, but suddenly he broke free and fired his pistol. Lukashka fell, with blood pouring from his body…The Chechens, red-haired, with trimmed moustaches, lay dead, slashed by the Cossacks’ sabres. Only the one who had shot Lukashka was alive, squatting and staring around like a wounded hawk, with dagger drawn to defend himself. The cornet walked up and, in passing, shot him…The Chechen struggled to rise, but fell dead.[44]

The Russo-Circassian War; Abkhazia and Turkey

The crushing of resistance in Daghestan and Chechenia did not signify peace throughout the Caucasus: an even longer, though sporadic, Russian war against the native peoples had been in progress in Circassia since the 1770s, and did not reach its tragic conclusion until 1864 (see Map 20). This hundred-years’ war,[45] beginning with the Russians’ building of Mozdok in 1763, lasted as long as it did because of Turkey's determination not to lose its Caucasian possessions, and Russia's determination to expand into Asia at the expense of Turkey. For long the Russians concentrated on their eastern sector in Chechenia and Daghestan, where native opposition, threatening Russia's control of Georgia, was powerfully motivated by the *murid*s. All-out war had been more feasible in eastern Caucasus because Persia, the overlord of Daghestan, had become less formidable than Turkey, and its predominantly Shiᶜah religion did not evoke such support as the Ottomans could expect from their Sunnih co-religionists in Circassia, where by 1800, because of Russian oppression, there were many Kabardans and west Circassians for whom Islam had become ‘the ideological banner in an anti-colonial war’.[46]

The Russo-Circassian War was clearly one of genocide, the events of which Russian historians prefer to ignore because it led to the near-extinction of a country almost as large as England, which, although not unified, possessed strong internal ethnic and cultural institutions. By the late eighteenth century Circassian territory hardly extended north of the Kuban and Terek rivers, although formerly the influence of the Kabardan princes had reached far into the steppe, and their clashes with the Nogays took them as far north as the Don. It was over this steppe that the Russians, having annexed Crimea from Turkey in 1783 and massacred the Nogays, advanced into north-western Caucasus, establishing forts and waging relentless war to push the Kabardans and west Circassians off the plain.

In the first stage of the Russo-Circassian War (1763–79) the Russians had mainly attacked the Kabardans – who controlled access to the Darial gorge and Georgia – on the pretext that, because of former oaths of allegiance, Kabarda belonged to Russia. The Kabardans and west Circassians fought the Russians courageously, receiving some support from the Turks and Crimeans, but their resistance slackened after a disastrous battle in 1779. After this the Russians built more forts to isolate the Kabardans from the west Circassians, and two Kabardan political factions themselves failed to unite – so that in the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–91 some Kabardan princes took the Turkish side, while others served with the Russians.[47]

Russia's plan for the Caucasus was made clear in 1785, when it was designated a governor-generalship – one of the eighteen into which Catherine II had divided the empire. Unusually, no territorial limits were set to this region, and all its new settlements immediately received the status of towns, even if they had no inhabitants – thus inviting unlimited expansion. Distribution of land to the Russian gentry quickly amounted to thousands of square miles.[48] Beyond the Kuban and Terek, however, every inch of Russian advance had to be wrested by force from the native peoples to whom the land belonged.

In 1785 Chechenia, lying to the east of Kabarda, was the scene of an anti-Russian campaign led by Sheykh Mansur, and after a victory at his native village of Aldy, Muslims from many communities flocked to his banner, capturing Vladikavkaz, defeating the Russian army in Kabarda, and advancing westwards towards Circassia. After another victory over the Russians, Mansur, fighting and proselytizing Islam, travelled on to the Turkish port of Anapa on the Circassian Black Sea coast, in the hope of obtaining Ottoman participation in this *ghazawat*. However, as the next Russo-Turkish war began in 1787, large Russian forces (including Kabardans) subjected western Circassia to systematic despoilment. In Abaza territory, for instance, Russian and Kalmyk troops burned villages and trampled corn crops. On the other hand, in a disastrous campaign to capture Anapa the Russian army lost half of its 8,000 men. In 1791 the Russians did storm Anapa and took Sheykh Mansur prisoner, but the war ended without any permanent territorial gains by the Russians, who were obliged to recognize that west Circassia was a Turkish dependency.[49] In the following year the increasing oppression of Shapsug peasants by their rulers evoked an uprising, in which the Abadzekh and

Natukhay tribes joined forces. This peasant revolt was crushed at the battle of Bziyuko, where in response to a request from Shapsug and Bjedug nobles, the Russians sent a Cossack detachment with cannon, ignoring the fact that this was a foreign country in which Russia had no authority to interfere. The next demonstration of St Petersburg's determination to conquer and colonize was an attempt to station Don Cossacks along western Circassia's northern frontier on the Kuban. When this failed (the Cossacks rebelled and went home) 9,000 men of the Black Sea Cossack host (originally Zaporozhyans) were moved from Ukraine to the Kuban, where they founded the town of Yekaterinodar (‘Catherine's Gift’) and numerous villages. (By 1850 more than 100,000 Ukrainians had moved to the Kuban, where their descendants still form a considerable proportion of the population.) The creation of this new cordon, west of the existing Terek Cossack lines, was said to be for defence against the ‘predatory’ Circassians. An additional irritant to Circassian patriots was the imposition of an administrative system amounting to military occupation, which threatened the survival of Kabarda-Circassia and its national culture. This included the introduction of ‘clan courts’ subordinated to the Mozdok commandant, which were based on customary law (*ᶜadah*) at the expense of *shariᶜah*, since the latter could be a powerful organizing force among Muslim peoples.

In 1794 there was another big uprising of the Kabardan–Circassian peoples (whose general name for themselves was ‘Adyg’), led by Princes Ismaᶜil and ᶜAdil-Giray Atazhuko and Atazhuko Khamurza, and involving all social classes. Although the Kabardans fought bravely, they were outnumbered by the Russians, who suppressed the rebellion harshly and sent many of its leaders to Siberia. The Circassians could not achieve a united front because of tribal differences: the Bjedugs, Khatukays, Temirgoys, Besleneys, Abazas and others had a ‘feudal’ class system similar to that of the Kabardans, but the Abadzekh, Shapsug and Natuhwaj tribes were ‘democratic’. Their convictions inspired an anti-feudal movement, with an assembly of elected elders who introduced changes to the social system. This widened the gap in Adyg society between the peasantry and hereditary landowners – the latter tending to collaborate with the Russians. The damaging effect of this disunity was demonstrated in 1796, when the Abadzekhs’ plan to attack the Russians was betrayed by a Bjedug prince, resulting in disaster for the Abadzekhs and the execution of their Abazan leaders by the Turkish commander in Anapa. Because of this inter-tribal conflict the west Circassian peasants ‘announced full equality for all’, and government by a ‘national congress’.

Meanwhile the Russian Cossack line along the Kuban was unsettled. The Circassians made frequent night raids, skirmishing was endemic, and occasionally operations on a larger scale took place, as in 1799 when the Black Sea Cossacks made their first raid across the Kuban. The second phase of the war began that year, after ^{c}Adil-Giray escaped from Siberia and resumed leadership of the Kabardan struggle. Through the zeal of Imam Isḥaq Abuko a *shari^{c}ah* movement developed and, with many of the petty gentry supporting the idea of equality, this became one of the aims of their ‘holy war’. However, as Kabardan numbers were already much depleted, when their leaders were killed in 1807 the struggle subsided and Russian ‘pacification’ was resumed.[50] In view of the duration and determination of the fight for independence on the part of many Kabardans, in collaboration with neighbouring peoples, the opinion that ‘The Kabardians, isolated throughout their history from other

North Caucasian Muslims, did not participate in the wars… against the Russians'[51] does not seem justified.

The Russian wedge between Kabarda and west Circassia was driven deeper in 1803 by the construction of Kislovodsk fort and further Cossack settlements on the hills west and south of the Kuban. This evoked another rebellion involving almost all Kabardans and some Tagaur Osetians – and a bloodthirsty Russian punitive expedition to 'drown the Kabardan lands in blood' (in the words of Tsitsianov) in which eighty settlements were devastated and many Kabardans fled south to the Karachay mountains. As the Russians took more and more Kabardan land for forts, destroying villages and cutting wide forest breaks, the Kabardan princes returned to the struggle during the Russo-Turkish War of 1806–12, proposing to lead all their subjects away from the plain into the mountains. However, the peasants refused to go, whereupon the princes petitioned St Petersburg to continue their privileges. Although Kabardan attacks subsided, imperial army marauders ravaged the Baksan and other gorges, burning down 200 villages and 110 mosques, and stealing herds of horses, buffaloes, cattle and sheep, and other possessions, with such brutality that even the St Petersburg war ministry condemned their actions as 'excessively cruel and inhumane' and more likely to make the Kabardans hate the Russians than to live in peace. This was confirmed by the ensuing anti-Russian campaigns launched by the Kabardans, Karachays, Balkars, Osetians and Chechens. Among the 'privileges' granted to the Kabardan princes when they eventually submitted was the formation of Kabardan regiments in the Russian army, and the establishment of schools for sons of the native aristocracy, in which they were practically held as hostages.

Nevertheless the Russians incited further trouble in Kabarda in 1816–18 by Yermolov's application of his notorious strategy for subjugation: defeat the natives, disarm them, settle Cossacks among them and trample their crops on the stalk for five consecutive years. In Kabarda he erected many new forts in the mountains to prevent the Kabardans and Balkars from moving down to lowland pastures. Yermolov also subordinated the administration to a ‘Temporary Kabarda Court’ which severely restricted the independence of nobles and mullahs. Because of all this, another uprising occurred in Kabarda in 1822–5, with many attacks on Russian forts, which again brought Yermolov's terrorist measures to bear on the native population – as well as an offer to restore the rights of the nobles if they abandoned their struggle for independence. While many accepted this deal, other Kabardan princes chose to withdraw with their people into the Zelenchuk and Urup gorges in the Karachay mountains, from where, led by Jambulat Aitek and Ismaᶜil Kasai, they raided Cossack settlements on the upper Kuban. However, this achieved little against the massed armies of Russia, and by 1828, as a result of the employment of harsh measures (and the collaboration of some Kabardan princes) Kabarda appeared to have been finally conquered. Much land there was granted by the Russian government to a Kumuk prince, Bekovich-Cherkasskiy, for his part in the ‘pacification’ of Kabarda.[52] Later on, Russian landowners also obtained Kabardan estates under policies promulgated by Alexander II. In Balkaria too, the lords now agreed to become Russian subjects, on condition that their privileges were preserved. Only the Karachays – the nearest neighbours of the west Circassians in the mountains – continued to fight, despite punitive expeditions in 1828 and 1835–7, and their resistance received renewed inspiration ten years later during Shamil's campaigns in Daghestan and Chechenia.[53]

It was in this period that the Russian invasion was extended to Abkhazia which, although considered by the Georgians as their possession,[54] was ethnically and culturally related closely to the Abazas and other west Circassians. Abkhazia shared their fate as it was superficially Muslim and, like western Georgia, still subject to the Ottoman Empire. The Abkhazians of our time are said to be approximately half Muslims and and half Christians, but are sensibly ‘indifferent in matters of religion’, as ‘both these religions form no more than a surface layer on the old paganism’.[55] At the end of the eighteenth century Prince Kelech Bey Chachba (in Georgian ‘Sharvashidze’) of Abkhazia had seized power and sworn loyalty to the sultan, but in 1803, with the ultimate aim of independence from all alien powers, he engaged in abortive negotiations with the Russians in Tbilisi. Five years later, during the Russo-Turkish War of 1806–12, Kelech Bey was murdered by his son Aslan, but when the Russians captured Sukhum in 1810 it was another son, Safar, that they installed as ruler of Abkhazia. Russian military occupation did not put an end to strife, amounting to civil war in 1821–5. The conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–9 found the Abkhazians still unsubmissive and, moreover, in league with their Circassian neighbours to the north and, as the Russian government did nothing to improve economic conditions, turmoil continued in Abkhazia until the 1860s.[56]

In western Circassia, Turkey's cession of the Black Sea coast to Russia by the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) prompted Nicholas I to urge the governor of the Caucasus on to further efforts: ‘Having completed one glorious task, another one… equally glorious…awaits you – the final subjugation of the mountain peoples or the extermination of those who will not submit.’[57] What this ‘glorious’ campaign meant in reality was illustrated in October 1830, when about 200 Shapsug, Abadzekh and Natukhay villages were burned to the ground and all their newly harvested food supplies ruthlessly destroyed by Russian soldiers. At the same time, relations in west Circassian society became more complex, as the elected elders formed a kind of petty gentry and abandoned the peasant cause. Because of this, in 1826 the ‘democratic’ Shapsugs, Abadzekhs and Natukhays even sought help from the Russian authorities – but received none. Consequently the Circassian national congress sent a delegation to western Europe to appeal for help against Russia's relentless subjugation. The Circassians, led by Isma^{c}il Zewsh, generated much sympathy for their cause, particularly in Britain, but because of ‘great-power’ foreign policy considerations, little practical assistance was given. While some British politicians declared correctly that Russia had no rights whatever over Circassia, the Russians pretended that the Circassians were to blame for exposing themselves to a long war by refusing to submit (!), and accused British and Turkish ‘agents’ of stirring up these ‘simple savages’ by encouraging them to unite and defend their liberty. A few British ‘Russophobes’ not only took up the Circassian cause, but, like some Polish, Italian and Hungarian volunteers, also went there to fight for them.[58] At least sympathy was expressed by the Russian poet Lermontov (who himself had been condemned to serve as an officer in North Caucasus in 1837–8 and 1840–1) in his lament ‘To the Caucasus’: ‘Caucasus, O, distant land! Home of simple liberty!…You too are crushed and bloodied by war!…Alas, Circassians, all former joy is banished forever from your land – the fatherland, once freedom-blessed, for freedom's sake perishes before our eyes.’

Most of the fighting between 1829 and 1840 was along the steep Black Sea coast, where the Russians were driven out of Gelenjik, Gagra and Pitsunda by warriors of the Natuhwaj, Shapsug, Ubykh, Abadzekh and Abkhaz tribes under such dedicated leaders as Howduko Mansur, Tuguzuko Kazbech (‘the lion of Circassia’) and Shchurukhuko Tuguz. As Turkish ships continued to bring supplies to the Circassians (exchanging them, as usual, for slaves), the Russians tried to blockade the coast by building a line of forts at potential harbours, such as Tuapse and Sochi – a hazardous undertaking because the precipitous coast allowed access only from the sea, in the teeth of determined opposition. These forts were manned by Black Sea Cossacks, augmented by reinforcements from Ukraine, but – hastily built, unhealthy and under continuous harassment – most of the ‘Black Sea Coastal Line’ forts either fell to the Circassians or quickly became uninhabitable.

The continuing importance of the Kabardans, and the Russians’ need to handle them with caution because of their high status and family connections, was illustrated in 1846, when Shamil's army advanced westwards, hoping to blockade the Darial Military Road, join up with the Circassians and widen the front against the Russians. However, encountering overwhelming forces, Shamil had to retreat into Chechenia, taking with him many Kabardan warriors and nobles, including Muhammad-Mirza Anzorov, whom Shamil appointed as his senior deputy, then captain of Circassian cavalry and later as governor of Lesser Chechenia. Anzorov ran a great risk in these posts, as the Russians had introduced very severe punishments for Kabardans who supported Shamil; but in 1851 he was fatally wounded in battle. Thus the Kabardans’ war of independence ended in

1846, after which some emigrated to west Circassia to continue resistance there.[59]

From 1839 onward events in Daghestan demanded the switching of the main Russian aggressive effort to that front, but Shamil continued his efforts to mobilize the west Circassians for ‘holy war’ by sending a series of representatives (*naib*s) to proselytize *murid*ism and strengthen Islam. The first of these, Hajji-Muhammad, called on the Circassians to rise against Russia, reform their society, destroy the princes and liberate the peasantry. He recruited a militia of young Circassians exiled from their native villages, who wanted to avenge parents killed by the Russians. Although at first Hajji-Muhammad got much support from the peasants, especially in Abadzekhia, they became alienated by his zeal in imposing the rules of Islam and his use of force to exact alms. He was also hated by the gentry, and Nicholas I offered 1,000 rubles to any Kabardan who brought him in alive. After Hajji-Muhammad's death in 1844 he was succeeded by Suleyman-Efendi, who gathered an army of Shapsug, Natukhay, Abadzekh and other horsemen as reinforcements for Shamil. After the failure of their attempt to link up with Shamil in 1846, Suleyman-Efendi deserted the *murid* cause and went over to the Russians. In 1849–53 there was another upsurge in Circassian activity under the influence of Shamil's emissary, Muhammad-Amin, who finally converted the Abazas to Islam.[60]

Even the demands of the Crimean War (1853–6) did not lead to a reduction in the Russian military presence (280,000 men) in the Caucasus, because of the paramount importance attributed to it in Russia's plans in Asia. However, the Allied blockade of Sevastopol gave the Turks freedom in the Black Sea, so that Russia's coastal forts could not be supplied, and were abandoned in 1854. The longest episode of Circassian resistance was the revolt of the previously ‘pacified’ Bjedugs in 1853–9. Nevertheless the Russians continued to advance from the Kuban, penetrating the White River valley and founding the fort of Maykop in 1856, burning villages and trampling down crops, so that the Circassians faced the choice of submitting and moving down to the plain, or withdrawing farther across the mountains and eventually reaching the coast where, if they did not wish to die of starvation, they were forced to take ship for Turkey. By such means the Russians overcame the Abadzekhs and a large part of the Abazas, whose territory on the upper course and western tributaries of the Kuban provided the army with a secure base in the mountains, and land on which Kuban Cossacks could be settled. The Russians' capture of Shamil in 1859 and the virtual end of the war in the east released more Russian forces for the final subjugation of Circassia, where the tribes that remained free – mainly Shapsugs, Abadzekhs, Abkhazes and Ubykhs – proclaimed *ghazawat* in 1861, with only some 65,000 warriors to face 300,000 Russian soldiers. More appeals to the British and other European states from the Circassian–Abkhazian Assembly in Sochi were ignored, as the Russians, joined by Georgian irregulars, launched a ruthless assault on the coast, cutting down forests, burning every village and driving out the population, until their artillery annihilated the small body of Abkhazians, Ubykhs and Shapsugs who in May 1864 made a last stand in the Aibga gorge of the river Psou, 40 miles from Sochi (see Map 20).[61]

North Caucasus and Daghestan: harassment and deportation

Perhaps the cruellest action in the Russians’ genocidal war against the Circassians was the deportation of most of the survivors to Turkey. Between 1858 and 1863 all of the Besleneys and many of the Nogays, Temirgoys, Kabardans, Abadzekhs, Abazas, Shapsugs and Ubykhs were driven from their land, and had no choice but to emigrate to Turkey or remain under Russian rule.[62] Precise numbers are unknown, but an informed estimate is that about 500,000 left Circassia,[63] while only some 140,000 remained, to be resettled in locations dictated by the Russian government, and forcibly converted to Christianity. Of the Circassians who emigrated (often referred to by the Arabic term *muhajir*s) many perished in overcrowded boats, and a large proportion died of disease and privations on the way or in camps in Turkey, where conditions for uprooted Circassians were less generous than Turkish information promised. Many soon wanted to return home and some succeeded in doing so, despite Alexander III's explicit prohibition on allowing them back, on pain of imprisonment in Siberia. But Circassia was left with only remnants of its native population, and by 1900 in the coastal region, where Russian colonization was a failure, the once fruitful orchards and fields had reverted to tangled forest.[64] As usual, Russian communist writers, rather than acknowledge that this was a ruthless expulsion to rid a Russian nationalist government of ‘troublesome subjects’, repeated the tsarist propaganda that it was ‘a catastrophe provoked by Turkish agents’.[65]

As in Daghestan and Chechenia, the cessation of continuous warfare in 1864 did not complete the subjugation of north-west Caucasus. The Russians hastened to deprive Abkhazia of its separate status by deposing the Chachba ruling family. However, the attempt to complete the incorporation of Abkhazia into Russia by transforming its freemen into serfs caused an anti-Russian uprising in 1866, after the violent suppression of which more than 25,000 additional Abkhazians followed the Circassians into exile in Turkey. The threat of deportation also led to a revolt of the Karachays in 1873.[66]

Despite their general ‘loyalty’ to Russia, some Kabardans and Osetians too joined in the exodus, including the inhabitants of forty-five villages (more than 10,000 people) in western Kabarda; and more than 4,000 Tagaur and Digor Osetians. These included at least one Osetian who had made an outstanding career in Russian state service – Musa Kundukh(ov). Born in 1818 in a mountain village, he was educated in the St Petersburg Corps of Pages from the age of 12, became a cavalry officer in 1836 and was soon promoted to general, eventually becoming head of the Osetian, then the Chechen Military District. At the end of the Caucasian War, however, he despised the Russian régime and emigrated to Turkey along with Chechen refugees, hoping to form a North Caucasian army for the liberation of his homeland, and became known as Musa Pasha.[67]

Meanwhile the Russian government was also disposing of troublesome inhabitants of Daghestan and Chechenia. More than 22,000 Chechens, along with 3,000 Kabardans and Osetians, were expelled to Turkey, while under laws framed in 1860 for the administration of Russia's ‘Daghestan Province’, patriots – in particular Avars – who had taken part in the war of resistance and subsequent rebellions were seized as elements ‘known for their political unreliability or criminal propensities’, and between 1862 and 1871 several thousand were either executed or despatched to Siberian penal settlements.[68]

The savage persecution to which the peoples of North Caucasus had been subjected left strongly anti-Russian feelings which persisted for many years. An occasion for venting suppressed hatred came with the anti-Turkish war which Russia embarked upon in 1877. On the South Caucasian front Russians marched from Georgia to besiege Erzurum and occupy Kars, occupying territory in Turkish Armenia which they kept until the First World War. Farther north the Turks temporarily recaptured Sukhum and the Abkhazian coast. Many North Caucasian exiles in Turkey took part in these campaigns, a volunteer army under Ghazi Muhammad (Shamil's son) and the Osetian Musa Pasha fighting on the Anatolian front, while about 1,000 Circassians landed at Sukhum. As the Muslims of Abkhazia played a considerable part in the anti-Russian rebellion, many more were forced to emigrate to Turkey after Russia's victory. In Abkhazia their place was taken by Greeks and Armenians from Kars and other districts of eastern Turkey, but especially Mingrelians from western Georgia. Only about 20,000 of the ‘wild and unsubmissive’ Abkhazians survived in their homeland (16% of the population of 128,000 in the 1830s) and these were banned from living on the coast or in big towns, suffering under the mendacious official stigma of ‘disloyalty’.[69]

The uprising in Abkhazia and Circassia inspired further insurrection in Daghestan, at a time when the Russians were preparing to disarm the whole region. Starting in Avaristan in August 1877 over the killing of people on the way to market by a Russian soldier, the fighting swiftly developed into a *ghazawat* led by the imam Hajji-Muhammad. The Russian headquarters at Gunib was besieged, and soon the whole of Kazi-Kumukh joined the revolt, as did the people of Dargo, Tabasaran and Kaitag, the Lezgis of Kürin and Kuba, and the mountain Chechens. Despite a heroic struggle by the Daghestanis, who inflicted considerable casualties on the imperial army and gained control throughout Daghestan apart from the ex-shamkhalate of Kumuk, their forces lacked organization, and the Russians, as before, had the advantage of artillery and a huge army. As in Shamil's time, the mountain people fought fiercely, contesting every village and cave, while on their side the Russians systematically destroyed every native dwelling. In Dargo the village of Tsudakhar was the scene of a fight to the death by its defenders, as was the headquarters of the uprising, Sogratl, whose tall defensive towers were bombarded into rubble and its 200 defenders annihilated before the tsar's troops could claim victory and an end to the uprising, two months after it began. Russian retribution was vicious: 300 of the Daghestani insurgents were hanged and nearly 5,000 deported to penal servitude in Siberia.[70]

Russia's Caspian frontier: Kalmykia and Turkmenistan

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Russians used the Caucasus as a strategic base for conquests in Central Asia, where by the 1860s the imperial army, advancing south from Siberia and south-east from Orenburg, had invaded and subdued most of the khanates, including Khokand, Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara. Khiva on the Amu Darya was, however, still a formidable enemy, and its vassals, the Turkmens of the Ust-Yurt and Karakum deserts, prevented a Russian advance from the west. St Petersburg's assault on these lands from the Caspian coast began in 1840, when the Russian navy seized Ashurada island in the south-east corner of the Caspian and established a naval base on Persian soil. In 1869, ignoring all Persian protests, they shipped troops and engineers across from North Caucasus to the Turkmen coast at Kyzyl-Su (‘Red Water’, soon given the equivalent name in Russian, *Krasnovodsk*) and established a fortress and naval base, before moving south to build more forts to consolidate their hold on ‘Transcaspia’. From Krasnovodsk Russian expeditionary forces set out in 1872 on campaigns against the khanate of Khiva, co-ordinated with an attack from Tashkent, and the city was taken in 1873.[71]

The vast area of steppe and desert east of the Caspian was the homeland of five main Turkmen tribes, including the Yomut and Tekke, which largely controlled the movement of caravans across the Karakum desert. The Turkmens’ territory was bounded on the south by the Kopet Dagh mountain range, which formed the frontier of Persian Khorasan. The Tekkes and Yomuts had established themselves in the steppes and oases bordering the Kopet Dagh, and in 1858–61 so thoroughly defeated the shah's army that they achieved independence from Persia, although they were still formally vassals of Khiva. The Tekkes were acknowledged to be superior in courage, enterprise and technical skills to other tribes but they were among the poorest and, like all Turkmens, much given to caravan robbery and livestock-rustling, relying on their excellent horses to carry them easily and swiftly for long distances over the steppes.[72]

By 1876 all of Central Asia to the east and north of the Amu Darya was annexed to Russia as the provinces of Turkestan and Trans-Caspia, only the Tekke Turkmens remaining independent and fiercely antagonistic towards the Russians, who mounted four abortive military expeditions across the Karakum against them between 1870 and 1879. For the fifth expedition to subdue or exterminate the Tekkes, the Russian government appointed M. D. Skobelev, a general notorious for his ruthlessness, to organize the decisive assault on the last Tekke oasis, guarded by Dängäl Tepe fort. The army that he shipped across the Caspian from Tbilisi Military District – including Terek and Kuban Cossacks and Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Daghestani and Circassian units – marched 280 miles through the desert to reach Dängäl Tepe, and bombarbed the mud-brick village and fortress with artillery and rockets, and finally destroyed it by mining.[73] From the Russians' point of view this operation in January 1881 was a victory, but in Skobelev's estimation some 20,000 Turkmens – about half of them women and children – were slaughtered, in accordance with his order that no quarter was to be given. The justified opinion of an English contemporary was that this 'was not a rout, but a massacre; not a defeat, but extirpation'.[74]

Thereafter Russia's possession of the east coast of the Caspian and all of Central Asia was confirmed, especially by the construction of the Trans-Caspian railway between Krasnovodsk and Tashkent in 1881–95. This Caucasus route, extending the existing railway from Russia to Baku and Tbilisi, and requiring the crossing of the Caspian by steamship from Baku to Krasnovodsk, became the quickest for travel from Moscow to Central Asia (travel time c. 132 hours!) until the opening of the Orenburg–Tashkent railway in 1905.[75]

Russification in the Caucasus

While these brutal events, which greatly reinforced the Islamic, anti-Russian spirit of the native peoples, had been taking place in North Caucasus and 'Transcaspia', south of the mountains, in what the Russians called 'Transcaucasia', social changes occurred which brought the peoples of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan closer to nineteenth-century European civilization in its Russian form. This transformation chiefly affected the cities, among which Tbilisi and Baku were the largest, with more than 100,000 inhabitants each in 1900. While Baku had grown rapidly (from only 14,000 in 1860) since the building of the Transcaucasian Railway along the Caspian coast and the development of oil production, it could not compare with Tbilisi in cultural amenities. In addition to an imposing array of Russian colonial institutions – the Viceroy's palace, the Caucasus military headquarters, the arsenal, seven barracks, two military colleges, a prison, the garrison cathedral and that ubiquitous symbol of Russian imperialism, a St Alexander Nevskiy Chapel – Tbilisi (the Russians used the Persian form Tiflis) had a municipal duma, several schools for boys and girls, a music college, a library, public parks, theatres, hotels, clubs, and electric trams. As in all other Caucasian towns, the broad, straight streets of the Russian quarter contrasted with the labyrinth of narrow, winding lanes, crowded caravanserais and bazaars of the 'native quarter' with its mixture of nationalities.

Even in Tiflis, the capital of 'Transcaucasia', in 1897 only 25% of the civilian inhabitants were Russian, and in Baku somewhat less; in most other towns, e.g. Kutaisi, Alexandropol, Kars and Yelizavetpol (Ganja), Russians accounted for 7–8% of the inhabitants, and in Yerevan, Batumi, Nukha and Shusha 2% or less. Outside the towns there were even fewer Russians – from 8% in the environs of Tbilisi to less than 1% in the provinces of Kutaisi and Yerevan. In the latter, the cultural centre of Armenia, Armenians (37%) were outnumbered by 'Tatars' (Azerbaijani Muslims, 53%). In contrast with these figures for the South Caucasian provinces, which exemplify their status as distant colonies of Russia, in two of those lying to the north of the mountains – Kuban and Stavropol – Russians, after the expulsion of the Circassians and Nogays, constituted over 90% of the settled population, compared with Terek province's 35% Russians. The various categories of non-native people living in Russia's

Caucasian colony included, on the one hand, German immigrants introduced as model farmers: Mennonites on the Kuban, and Swabian fundamentalist sects near Tbilisi and Ganja; and on the other, Russians for whom this was a place of exile. These political offenders included people accused of 'religious crimes', e.g. Old Believer proselytizers, those who 'insulted Orthodoxy', and adherents of 'fanatical sects'. Among such exiles were the Molokane sect, who lived in Svaneti, Shamakha and near Baku, and the Dukhobors in Kars province and Akhalkalaki district, most of whom emigrated to North America at the turn of the century.[76]

Georgian culture, 1820–1905

Because of the relatively large presence of Russians (mostly military and official) in Tbilisi, and the Georgians' own predisposition to European civilization, the Georgians took the lead among the peoples of South Caucasus in adopting Russian culture, although relations between Georgians and Russians was ambiguous. Outward signs of Russian influence during the 1820s and 1830s included the gradual abandonment of traditional costume in the Persian style in favour of European dress. Along with this, for the aristocracy, went not only learning the Russian language, but also the use of French in polite society, and in Tbilisi the new institutions which appeared included a Russian theatre (1845) and a Georgian theatre (1850). As the latter quickly became a lively focus of Georgian national culture, however, it was closed in 1854, not to reopen until 1869. Secular education became available in 1804, when a school for sons of the nobility was opened in Tbilisi, and this became the first grammar school (*gimnaziya*). Similar schools were opened in Kutaisi, Gori and other Georgian towns, and a girls' school followed as women were released from the partial seclusion which had been the rule as long as Persian, Turkish and

Daghestani invasions continued. The first newspaper in Georgian appeared in 1819 (*sakartvelos gazeti*), and the fortnightly supplement to the Georgian edition of the *Tiflis Gazette* – *tbilisis utṣqebani* (1832–) – became the first literary journal.[77]

The political ambiguity in Georgia after annexation to Russia is illustrated by the first generation of nineteenth-century Georgian writers: Alexander Cḥavcḥavadze, Grigol Orbeliani, Vakhtang Orbeliani, Giorgi Eristavi and Niḳoloz Baratashvili. All were of aristocratic origin, several having connections with the royal family and, despite a Russian education (including in some cases attendance at the St Petersburg Corps of Pages), nearly all took part in the Georgian Independence Society's conspiracy for the restoration of the Bagrationi monarchy by an uprising in 1832. Although the authorities frustrated the plan, and its participants were exiled to various parts of Russia or Poland, all subsequently made careers in the Russian army or civil administration. (The oldest, Cḥavcḥavadze, after his youthful participation in a pro-Bagrationi revolt of 1804, acted *against* insurgents during the Ḳakheti revolt of 1812.) Grigol Orbeliani fought against Shamil in Daghestan, and was appointed commandant of Avaristan in 1843, and commander-in-chief of forces in the Caspian Region in 1852; subsequently he acted as governor-general of the Caucasus. As poets, men of this generation were influenced by European Romanticism – Byron, Goethe, Schiller, Shakespeare, Mickiewicz and Pushkin – and wrote on the prevailing themes of nature, love, liberty and patriotic nostalgia for Georgia's heroic past.

The literary and intellectual development of the Georgian gentry continued in the second half of the century with Ilia Cḥavcḥavadze and Aḳaḳi Tṣereteli, who had both studied philosophy and political ideas at St Petersburg university. Their principal model in prose was Nikolai Gogol, so that Cḥavcḥavadze rivalled Gogol's *Old-World Landowners* in his own *Is the Man Human? (Ḳatsia – adamiani?)* with its humorous, mildly satirical depiction of Georgia's uneducated, superstitious and idle petty landowners. While Cḥavcḥavadze played a conspicuous part in many official bodies, Tṣereteli became deeply involved in a society for propagating literacy and in the revival of the Georgian theatre, and was in trouble with the authorities for writing an allusive poem on the death of Tsar Alexander II, for translating the *Internationale* into Georgian, and for his poem ‘My Faith’ comparing the 1905 Revolution with a long-awaited spring.[78]

The development of ideas about politics and social justice also reflected the ambiguity of Georgia's debt to Russia. Georgian class structure up to 1800 was highly traditional, having received few intimations of the changes that had occurred since the Middle Ages in western Europe, while on the other hand partly sharing the class structure prevailing in Persia and Turkey. Social relations in Georgia, however, especially the status of the peasantry, varied considerably. In Guria and ‘princely’ Svaneti, the peasants, although possessing no land personally, by custom used the landlord's land and were not entirely subject to his will.[79] In pre-Russian Georgia there were kings, princes of various ranks, and major and minor landowning gentry (often quite poor), and if this lagged behind social development in western Europe, where a similar social hierarchy had undergone much modification, it was not so far behind Russia, where despite innovations by Peter I and his successors, class divisions still verged on the feudal, with the landlord–serf relationship the norm throughout the nineteenth century.

Many young Georgian noblemen travelled to Russia after 1801, and the appellation ‘one who has drunk from [i.e. journeyed beyond] the Terek’ (Georgian *tergdaleuli*) became the mark of a man with experience of Euro-Russian culture.[80] Some of the new Georgian intelligentsia adopted the convictions of Russia's ‘conscience-stricken noblemen’, such as Herzen and Turgenev, whose works they had read, but it was also noblemen – the only educated class – who opposed the emancipation of the peasants when Tsar Alexander II mooted this in 1861. (Indeed, after a peasant revolt in Megrelia in 1857 it was the princely family of Dadiani that was penalized by deprivation of their right to govern.) When St Petersburg insisted that the Georgian serfs must be freed, the landowners (like their German counterparts in Russia's Baltic provinces), while accepting that peasants should receive personal freedom, resisted stubbornly all attempts to grant them land. They maintained that, although the nobility, according to King Vakhtang VI's law code, enjoyed unrestricted power over their peasants, the latter neither resented this nor saw the landlords as oppressors, because ‘we have always looked upon them, not as slaves or unfree men, but as producers in a common enterprise’, like the members of a household.[81] Even the tsar would not accept this dubious argument, which would have cast thousands of landless peasants adrift, and in 1864 it was decreed that peasants in eastern Georgia must be allocated land, for which, as in Russia, they would have to pay the landowner over nine years. In 1865 similar terms were applied in western Georgia (Kutaisi, Racha, Imereti and Guria, and in 1867 Megrelia) where the landowners themselves were poor, and their living standard scarcely differed from that of their serfs. Thus in practice the amount of land allotted was ‘very meagre in eastern Georgia and even smaller in the west’.[82] Abkhazia was a complete exception, since ‘most Abkhazian peasants were landowners…had very loose ties to the lords

[and]…considered the land theirs', so that the cause of the revolt at Lykhny in 1866 was the peasants' anger at having to pay Russia for the land they already owned. Even stronger resistance was encountered in Svaneti, both on the part of the slave-owning rulers (the Dadeshkeliani family) of 'princely Svaneti' and of the freemen of 'free Svaneti', where there were no nobles.[83]

So far as revolutionary ideas accompanying workers' unrest were concerned, the Georgian upper class (in Tbilisi rivalled in prosperity by middle-class Armenians) followed developments in Russia closely. Georgians were in the forefront of the Bakuninist Social Revolutionary movement in Moscow, a mass trial of whose members was held in 1877. In Russia revolutionary politics were dominated by the extremely popular Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) led by V. M. Chernov and N. D. Avksentyev and, after the 1904 schism in the Social Democratic (SD) Party, by Lenin's Bolshevik SD faction, rivalled by the majority Menshevik SDs, led by G. V. Plekhanov and J. Martov. In Georgia it was the moderate 'Mensheviks', led by Noe Zhordania and Pilipe Makharadze, and the Georgian Socialist Federalists, who shaped the revolutionary movement right up to 1920.[84] A special part was played by the Gurians of western Georgia, because of specific attitudes arising from its social structure and history of resistance to the Turks. 'The young intellectuals who gravitated towards Marxism in the 1890s were not the product of the established intelligentsia of urban Georgia, but rather neophytes who emerged from the most backward rural districts of western Georgia, most often from Guria.' It was a hotbed of peasant revolt, culminating in 1900 in a Menshevik-influenced movement against land-owners, which was called the 'Gurian republic'. Thus western Georgia was the birthplace of the first Georgian Marxists, including Egnate Ingoroqva, Zhordania and Makharadze.[85] Western

Georgia also produced the main influx of peasants to Tbilisi and other towns in the 1890s, as land hunger and loss of traditional markets for agricultural produce drove them to seek employment elsewhere. Russian workers formed a small but significant part of the workforce in Tbilisi, especially in the railway yards, and they played a crucial part in industrial strikes fomented by the Bolsheviks. Strikes had occurred in some industrial enterprises since the 1870s, and attempts to create workers' organizations began in the 1880s, but the first wave of industrial action came in 1900–2. The events of that time again illustrate the importance of rural rather than industrial movements in Georgia: the success of the 'Gurian republic' obliged 'the reluctant Marxists in Batumi and Kutaisi…to offer help to the peasants'. Nevertheless, the number of Georgian industrial workers, who would play a part in subsequent revolutionary events, was growing.[86]

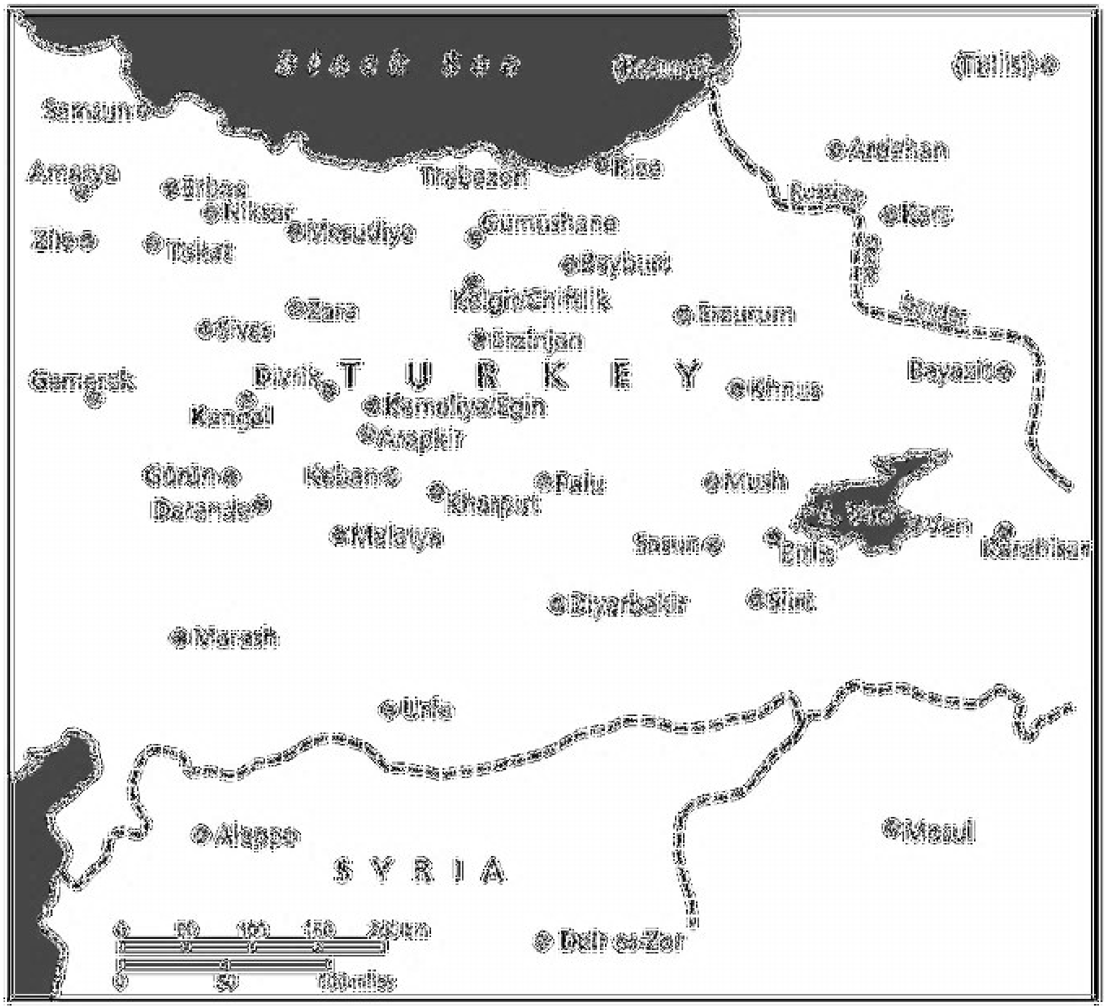
Armenia, 1840–1916

For all Armenians the centre of religious and national life was the seat of the catholicos of the Gregorian Church at Echmiadzin near Yerevan. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there had been two patriarchates subordinated to Echmiadzin: one in Armenian territory occupied by Turkey, on Akhtamar island in Lake Van, the other in Karabagh at Gandzasar monastery, which preserved the old designation 'Albanian', but both of these were abolished by 1850.[87] Notwithstanding the importance of Yerevan and Echmiadzin, Tbilisi, with its preponderance of Armenians (38% in 1897) over Georgians (26%), was a centre of Armenian culture, and a stronghold of Armenian craftsmen and merchants, some of whom became very rich and influential, so that Georgian life in the city was closely interwoven with that of the Armenians. Among other Armenian institutions, Tbilisi had a Gregorian cathedral and the Nersisyan school, and it was here that the first notable nineteenth-century Armenian writer, Khachatur Abovyan, made his mark. Abovyan's novel *The Wounds of Armenia* (*Verk Hayastani*, 1841, but published 1858), expressing Armenia's predicaments and the heroism of its people, shows the influence of the German and Russian Romantics with whose works he had become acquainted during his studies at Dorpat (Tartu) university. Abovyan returned to Tbilisi a convinced ‘Westerner’ devoted, as a teacher and official, to the reform and secularization of Armenian education. The conflict with Armenian religious conservatism in which this involved him was probably the cause of his mysterious disappearance at the age of 39 – according to rumours, to perpetual exile in Siberia. The torch of the Armenian enlightenment passed to Mikael Nalbandyan, who was born in the Armenian colony of Nakhchavan-on-Don, educated at Moscow and St Petersburg universities, and influenced by the Russian radical democrats Belinskiy, Herzen and Chernyshevskiy. Apart from poetry in the patriotic vein Nalbandyan wrote prose dedicated to the cause of ‘the unhappy Armenian, downtrodden, miserable, naked and hungry, oppressed not only by aliens and barbarians but also by the rich people, clergy and semi-literates of his own land’.[88] Nalbandyan was arrested in 1862 as a revolutionary and exiled to Russia, where he died at the age of 37. From the 1850s onward many Armenian writers flourished, including Rafael Patkanyan, the poet of *Free Songs*, and Gabriel Sundukyan, ‘for many years the life and soul of the flourishing theatrical life of Tbilisi’.[89]

By the 1870s the Armenians in the Russian Empire had developed a strong patriotic movement for liberation from the Turks and the recreation of an independent Armenia and, as this was combined with loyalty to the Russian state, their aspirations were generally encouraged by the authorities. However, the spirit of Russian chauvinism which flourished under Alexander III did not tolerate the national aspirations of any subject peoples, so that ‘Russian opposition towards the idea of an autonomous Armenia was almost as marked as Sultan ‘Abdul Ḥamid's own’, and discriminatory measures against the Gregorian Church and Armenian schools were introduced later by Nicholas II.[90]

Armenian cultural life was more cosmopolitan than that of the Georgians. The most widely read nineteenth-century novelist ‘Raffi’ (Hakop Melik-Hakopyan), for instance, came from Persia, while Venice continued to be a centre of Armenian Catholic culture, and the Armenians in Calcutta were also active. The largest centre, however, was Istanbul, where at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Armenian community numbered about 200,000, many of them holding positions of authority in the Ottoman state, and where the west Armenian patriarch had his seat. Of the many Armenian periodicals established before 1850, six were published in Istanbul, one in Smyrna and only three in Russia – *Caucasus*, *Ararat* and *Northern Lights*.[91]

A large part of the Armenian people lived within the Ottoman Empire, especially eastern Anatolia. During the nineteenth century, as Russian intrusion into the Black Sea, the Danube and the Caucasus grew, and Britain, France and other west European states encouraged the independence wars of Turkey's subject peoples, the increasingly pro-Russian orientation of many Armenians made the Turkish authorities suspicious of what they had previously considered to be ‘the loyal nation’. Amid the general turmoil of life under the arbitrary and corrupt administration in eastern Turkey, Armenians first rebelled in 1862 at Zeitun, and in Van an Armenian secret society, the Union of Salvation, was founded in 1872 as the forerunner of the later nationalist parties Hnchak (the Bell) and Dashnaktsutyun (Revolutionary Union). Meanwhile ‘capricious diversions of Europe into the so-called Armenian question’ served only to aggravate the plight of the Armenians in Turkey, and ‘Abdul Hamid's appalling response to European meddling’[92] – at a time when Turkey was in deep crisis – was the ferocious anti-Armenian violence of 1894–6, 1902–4 and 1909. This continued in 1915–16 under the ‘Young Turk’ military junta, when hundreds of thousands of Armenians in every region between the Russian border and Istanbul were deported from their homes and massacred, while many took refuge in Russia (see Map 21). By 1912 the two million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were reduced to around 1,800,000: about one million of these were to be slaughtered in 1915–16.[93]


Black Sea
Batumi
(Tbilisi)
Samsun
Amasya
Erbaa
Niksar
Mesudiye
Zile
Tokat
Trebizond
Rize
Ardahan
Russia
Kars
Gümüshane
Bayburt
Kelgit Chiftlik
Zara
Sivas
Erzurum
Erzinjan
Persia
Gemerek
Divrik
TURKEY
Khnus
Bayazit
Kangal
Kemaliya/Egin
Arapkir
Gürün
Keban
Kharput
Palu
Mush
Darende
Malatya
Sasun
Bitlis
L. Van
Van
Karahisar
Diyarbakir
Siirt
Marash
Urfa
Aleppo
SYRIA
Mosul
Deir ez-Zor
0 50 100 150 200 km
0 50 100 miles

Map 21 Some of the districts of Turkey where massacres of Armenian citizens were carried out in 1915 at the instigation of Turkey's racialist government. Certain place-names were subsequently changed, e.g. Kharput, the former centre of American missionary and educational activity, is now called Elazig (based on P. Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: a History of the Armenian Genocide*, London, 2004, map, p. 177, and D. M. Lang, *The Armenians: a People in Exile*, London, 1981, pp. 21–38).

The Caucasus had long been a theatre of deportation and massacre, with abduction into slavery in Persia and Turkey of enormous numbers of Georgians, Armenians and

Azerbaijanis,[94] the slaughter of the population of unsubmissive cities by Turks and Persians, and in the nineteenth century the systematic massacre of Daghestanis and Circassians by the Russian army, followed by 'ethnic cleansing', when hundreds of thousands of Circassians and other Muslims were deported to Turkey. Thus the systematic Turkish attempt at genocide of the Armenians was not without precedent or context. Attempts have been made to deny, minimize or partially explain away the Turkish atrocities by arguing that the Armenians were not the only ones who suffered in Turkey during the period 1912–22, that Armenians also killed Turks or that in specific instances figures may have been inaccurate.[95] However, even allowing for anti-Turkish prejudice in Western countries, and the possibility of some exaggeration on the side of the Armenians, it is difficult to disagree with the view that 'the deportations and massacres were calculated, irresponsible, brutal crimes' on the part of the Ottoman government.[96]

Azerbaijan, 1800–1900

In the region which became Russian Azerbaijan there was little awareness of national identity at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Russians embarked upon its conquest. For a résumé of events we revert to a publication previously cited, with its clichés and misinformation typical of Soviet Russian ideology, which portrayed Russia not as the instigator of the war in the Caucasus, but as an innocent party bravely defending itself against unjustified attack, while Iran and Turkey appear to have become allies:

> The subjection of several Azerbaijani khanates to Russia caused alarm…in Iran and Turkey as well as among the Western powers. In May 1804 on the

> initiative of Iran a war against Russia began which lasted until 1813. In late 1806 Turkey joined in the war against Russia. Nevertheless, Russia fought successfully on both fronts. The peoples of Transcaucasia, who fervently desired union with Russia, actively supported the Russian troops in military operations. Recognizing the hopelessness of opposing Russia, first Turkey, then Iran sued for peace. By the Treaty of Gülistan (1813) Iran renounced its claims to the khanates of Ganja, Karabagh, Shaki, Shirvan, Kuba, Baku and Talysh, whose annexation to Russia was by then a fact. However, the peace following the…treaty did not last long[:]…Iran's ruling circles, obsessed with their plans for conquering Transcaucasia and, as before, incited by Anglo-French diplomacy, started another war in 1826, the result of which was total defeat for Iran. The 1828 Turkmanchay Treaty finally confirmed the annexation of Northern Azerbaijan, including the khanate of Nakhichevan, to Russia. Thereafter the historic destinies of the two parts of Azerbaijan diverged. The continuation of Iran's domination of Southern Azerbaijan condemned that part of the country to profound socio-economic and cultural backwardness. The South Azerbaijanian people remain to this day in the situation of a national minority deprived of rights, and oppressed not only by Iranian and local exploiters, but also by foreign monopolies.[97]

This version of events – dating from 1962, the time of Nikita Khrushchov, when the Berlin Wall was new, the ‘Baltic Federation’ patriots were on trial in Riga, and workers’ protest meetings against increased work norms and food shortages were fired on by Interior Ministry special troops in Novocherkassk[98] – illustrates the ‘double-think’ and distortion of historical facts characteristic of Soviet Russian history writing.

Historical distortion however, was not confined to the KPSS régime, especially with regard to Azerbaijan. Even the choice of ethnonym to des-cribe its population could be politically loaded, as in the title of a Western publication which proclaims a Turcophile line: *The Azerbaijani Turks*. This implies that the Azerbaijanis are above all 'Turks'; and the absence of any reference whatever to Armenia in the book's index, although there are many references to Karabagh, confirms its political bias. This and the dismissal of 'Turkic' versus 'Turkish' as an 'artificial distinction in a cultural or ethnic sense',[99] and the consistent use of the term 'Azerbaijani Turkish', assert a close ethnic and cultural affiliation between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Meanwhile the real linguistic link which exists between them is scarcely mentioned: a scholarly international study of all the Turkic languages demonstrates so many close similarities between Azerbaijani, Turkish and Turkmen as to confirm their origin as dialects of the same language – thus reflecting the historical record of Turkmens' migration from Central Asia into Persia, where they were previously unknown, and from there by way of the Caucasus to Asia Minor and beyond.[100]

Up to the end of the nineteenth century it remained unclear what the Russian Empire's Azerbaijanis (or Muslims, Tatars or Turks of the former Shirvan khanate) should be called. About 160,000 of those living in Baku and its vicinity spoke either Persian or the related dialects of Tat and Talish. However, most of the population living in Baku, Yelizavetpol (formerly Ganja), Yerevan and Tiflis provinces (about 1.6 million) spoke a Turkic language and were officially classed as 'Tatars'. Locally, however, irrespective of their language, these people were known ‘quite incorrectly’ as ‘Persians’, from whom, indeed, like their kin in (southern) Azerbaijan, they were indistinguishable in costume and customs. Thus, notwithstanding the declaration by the nineteenth-century Azerbaijani writer M. A. Shakhtakhtinskiy about the appropriate name for the ‘Transcaucasian Muslims’ – ‘Whatever else…[they] are certainly not Persians’[101] – as citizens of Persia, imbued with Persian culture, they *were* in a sense Persians, just as there are Azerbaijanis today who will say that (rather than Turks) ‘We're really Persians.’

It is interesting that a similar question arises with the Turks of Turkey, although here the Turkish element is dominant and probably few of them would doubt that they are Turks:

> One of the most puzzling episodes in history is the ‘Turkification’ of Anatolia after the arrival of the Turks…[O]nly a comparatively small number of Turkish invaders from Central Asia entered Anatolia…in small bands over the next two hundred years…Yet after a time the whole population…which up to then had been Greek- or Armenian-speaking, and Christian, became Turkish and Muslim…[I]nstead of the indigenous mixture [of peoples] assimilating the Turks, the relatively few Turkish conquerors were strong enough to impose their stamp on the native peoples, so that the latter…were from now on known as ‘Turks’, living in a country called ‘Turkey’…the Turks of Anatolia are classified by ethnologists as a white race, and physically speaking are indistinguishable from most of the peoples of Europe.[102]

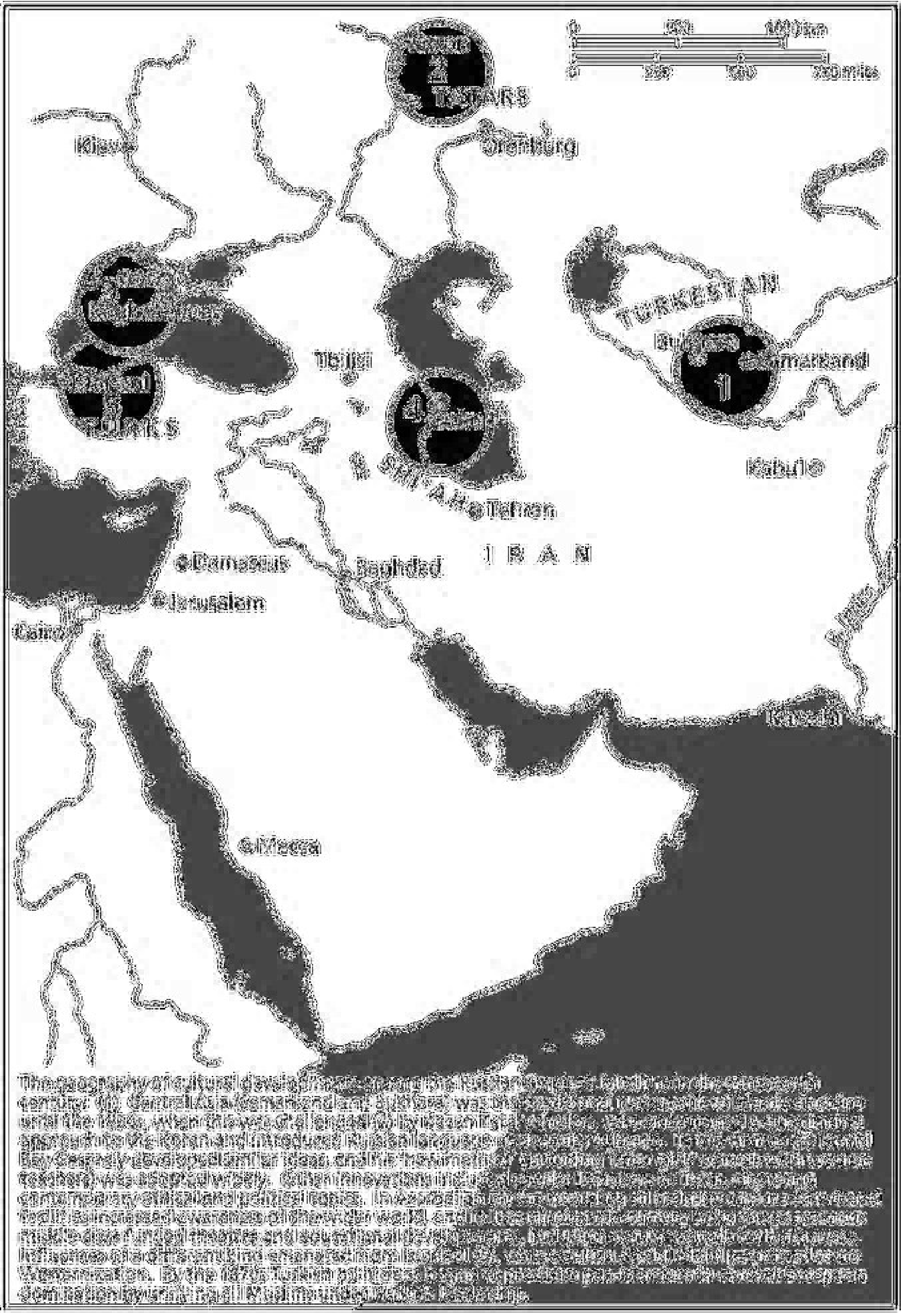
Perhaps this facility to absorb and be absorbed into a more numerous and ubiquitous non-Turkish population is characteristic of the Turks in history, and could be an acceptable analogue to counteract the defensiveness of Azerbaijani nationalists about their own ethnic expansion in the territory of Aran and Shirvan, rather than asserting that they were ‘autochthonous’.

In ‘Russian’ Azerbaijan the native population, including not only settled farmers and townspeople, but also semi-nomadic pastoralists,[103] was referred to by the Russians as ‘Tatars’, ‘Persians’ or simply ‘Muslims’, but not as ‘Azerbaijanis’. Even an obvious capital did not exist, as the country consisted of separate khanates, with several towns, of which Shamakha, the former capital of the Shirvan khanate, was considered to be the administrative centre until its destruction by earthquake in 1859, when this function was transferred to Baku. Other important towns included Ganja, Nukha (Shaki), and Shusha in Karabagh.

In the first stage of subordination to St Petersburg the government introduced rule by Russian military commanders – which was often arbitrary, ignoring the khans for most practical purposes – and gradually the khanates were abolished in favour of administrative districts on the Russian model, which occasioned local revolts. Although the khans lost their position, the lesser gentry – beys and aghas – retained their rights as landowners, and the peasants on their estates (only 30% of all peasants) became serfs, while the majority were considered to be state peasants on Russian crown lands. By this time some of the Azerbaijani gentry, like those in Armenia and Georgia, were attaining positions of rank in the Russian military and civil service, and the practice of Russifying surnames by adding the endings -ov or -skiy began, so that, for instance, the Persian

Akhundzadä or the Turkic Topchubashy were replaced by 'Akhundov' and 'Topchibashev'.[104]

The importance of Baku to the Russians increased rapidly with the commercial development of its oilfield, which had been exploited locally for centuries. The first refineries were founded near Baku in 1859, and from 1870 Russian and Armenian industrialists took over most industrial concerns from the Azerbaijanis. Other industries, such as silk production in Nukha (Shaki) were also developed mainly by Armenians or Russians, thus confirming their social role as owner-managers, and that of most 'Tatars' as workers. Baku's workers were largely Armenians (15.7% of the total in 1913), Russians (17.6%) or Azerbaijanis, called by the Russians 'Tatars' or 'Persians' (33%), but many labourers were also attracted from Daghestan: over 20% of oil-workers were Lezgis. Gradually quite a number of Azerbaijani entrepreneurs emerged, especially in Caspian shipping companies, but discrimination on ethnic–religious grounds received official recognition under a new system of local government introduced in 1870 for the Russian Empire's cities. In the Caucasus the proportion of non-Christians, i.e. Muslims, who could be elected to any council was limited to 50%, in 1892 reduced to 33%. Nevertheless, the flourishing of the Baku oil industry – with concessions to foreign capitalists (notably G. Nobel and the Rothschilds), the laying of a 540-mile-long pipeline from Baku to Batumi on the Black Sea, and oil production by 1898 exceeding that of the USA – allowed some Azerbaijani merchants to prosper as shipping magnates or industrialists. Some, such as I. M. Mirzoyev and Hajji Zayn-ul-^{c}Abidin Taghiyev became very rich, bringing status to the Azerbaijani community, and passing on some of their wealth as benefactions, e.g. schools (including at least one for girls) (see Map 22).[105]


0 500 1000 km
0 250 500 750 miles
Kazan
2
TATARS
Orenburg
Kiev
Crimea
Bakhchisaray
3
Istanbul
5
TURKS
Tbilisi
4
Baku
SHI'AH
Tehran
IRAN
TURKESTAN
Bukhara
Samarkand
1
Kabul
Damascus
Baghdad
Jerusalem
Cairo
Mecca
Karachi
Indus

The geography of cultural development among the Russian [illegible] in the nineteenth century. (1) Central Asia (Samarkand and Bukhara) was the [illegible] until the 1880s, when this was challenged (2) by Kazan Tatar [illegible] approach to the Koran and introduced Russian language [illegible] Bey Gasprinsky developed similar ideas, and his 'new method' [illegible] teachers) was adopted widely. Other innovations included [illegible] contemporary ethical and political topics. In Azerbaijan [illegible] led to increased awareness of the wider world, and [illegible] funded theatres and educational development [illegible] Influences of a different kind emanated from Istanbul (5) [illegible] Westernization. By the 1870s Turkish political [illegible] domination by uniting all Muslims under Turkish leadership.

Map 22 The geography of cultural developments among the Russian Empire's Muslims in the nineteenth century.

By 1900 a specifically Azerbaijanian national consciousness was developing, an essential part of which was the adoption of an ethnonym to replace the misnomers ‘Persian’ or ‘Tatar’. The name ‘Azerbaijan’ had been regularly used in Arabic manuscripts from the tenth century, but thereafter for five centuries Azerbaijan was submerged in a series of Arab caliphates, Seljuq sultanates, Mongol khanates and their successors, and Safavid Persia, and its identity was largely forgotten. While its Turkish speech became a written language in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, it was part of the common Oghuz language shared by the Azerbaijanis, Turkmens and Ottoman Turks, which did not begin to differentiate into separate languages until the fifteenth century. Azerbaijani Turkic was made the official language of the nucleus of Azerbaijan united by Fath-Ali Khan in the eighteenth century, and it became the medium for much history, science and literature, culminating in Vagif's poetry. The terms ‘Azerbaijan’ and ‘Azerbaijani language’ began to be used widely in the 1860s, but were not officially recognized in Russia until seventy years later.[106] (It should be noticed that ‘Azeri’ was not used to denote the Azerbaijani *Turkic* language until the late twentieth century, and then particularly by foreigners; for centuries before that ‘Azeri’ meant ‘a language spoken in Iranian Azerbaijan before the Turkicization of Azerbaijan’, which is generally assumed to have been one of the Caucasian languages, possibly Udin and certainly not modern Azerbaijani.)[107]

The emergence of Azerbaijani national awareness, related as it was to new Islamic political ideas and to secular views imported from Russia and Europe, was a harbinger of the political turbulence which would grip the Caucasus during the twentieth century.

Beginnings of Muslim politics in Russia's empire

By the 1850s the Volga and Crimean Tatars had become politically the most significant of the Muslims of the Russian Empire, as the development of modern ideas among them earned them a leading place in international Islamic thought, and Kazan, Orenburg and Ufa became ‘genuine intellectual centres…rivalling Constantinople, Cairo and Beirut’.[108] Since the eighteenth century, Volga Tatar merchants had travelled widely throughout Eurasia and established relations with many Islamic centres. Some had become rich enough to compete with their Russian counterparts and form an influential middle class, rivalling the Russians in terms of social and economic development.[109] The level of literacy among the Tatars impressed foreign travellers; as Karl Fuchs wrote in 1844, ‘A Tatar who cannot read or write is despised by his compatriots.’[110] Thanks to the initiative of the Tatar community itself, by the 1850s there were 430 primary schools (*maktab*s) and 50 secondary colleges (*madrasah*s) in Kazan province in which many young men studied to become qualified as teachers.[111] Prosperous Tatars sent their sons to study at the famous *madrasah*s of Central Asia, especially in Bukhara – although this had become an extremely conservative centre of scholasticism and rote-learning.[112] A Russian university was opened in Kazan in 1804 and, although very few Tatar students studied there, its existence encouraged the Tatars to think of further education.[113]

Kazan's first Tatar printing house opened in 1802; by mid-century six were operating, and the total number of books in Arabic, Tatar, Turkish and Persian printed up to 1855 was about 1.7 million (see Map 22).[114] Another indication of the high level of development of the Tatar community was that Tatar reformers used the Islamic obligation to give alms to encourage the foundation of benevolent societies, about eighty of which existed by 1912.[115]

Since Catherine II's time greater religious tolerance had allowed Tatars – formerly expelled from all cities – to return to Kazan and build mosques, and some of them established printing houses.[116] However, there were more anti-Muslim measures in the second half of the nineteenth century, partly because of the Russian merchant class's antagonism towards their Tatar competitors in the markets of Central Asia. Active propagation of Christianity also increased in 1865 with Russia's foundation of the Orthodox Missionary Society, and in 1867 the St Guriy Brotherhood was formed in Kazan specifically to convert Muslims, Animists, and Christian sects to the state religion.[117] It was through Russian publications that nineteenth-century Tatar society began to experience the impact of European scientific and social thought, and despite Islamic opposition to modern ideas Tatars realized that Russian culture could be of use to them, as could a knowledge of the Russian language.

Ottoman Turkey also exerted a powerful influence on other Muslim communities as secularization and Westernization developed from Sultan Abdul Mejid's 1839 reforms. This movement was retarded in the 1870s, but from then new pan-Islamist doctrine began to spread the idea of an international community of Muslims under the spiritual leadership of Turkey and devoted to liberation from

European domination.[118] From the 1880s, as railways and steamships made travel to Istanbul easier, it replaced Bukhara and Samarkand as the centre of Islamic learning for Muslims in the Russian Empire, and many future leaders of the new intelligentsia went to study there (see Map 22).

Once again the lead came from Kazan, where Imam Shihabuddin Märjäni, after a traditional education in Turkestan, followed the Tatar scholars al-Kursavi and an-Nasyri in rejecting dogmatic scholasticism in favour of a modern curriculum and a questioning approach to the Koran and Hadith (see Map 22).[119] For Nasyri the principal cause of the backwardness of Tatars and other Muslims in Russia was their lack of a native literary language (until now they had written in Arabic, Persian or Chaghatay). The new Tatar written language that he developed was based on the Kazan vernacular, which became the vehicle of modern Tatar literature. Nasyri who, unlike most of his Tatar contemporaries, learned Russian and was associated with Kazan university, also founded in 1871 the first Tatar school where Russian language and such secular subjects as history, geography and mathematics were taught.[120]

St Petersburg's intensification of oppression of Muslims, coinciding with the conquest of Turkestan and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8, stimulated political activity and religious fervour among the Volga Tatar community. The Sufi Naqshbandiya order enlisted many followers, including Märjäni, who preached asceticism, the brotherhood of all Muslims and the belief that subjection to Russia was temporary.[121]

Nasyri and Märjäni became ‘the fathers of *jadīd*ism’,[122] – ‘new method’ (Arabic ‘usul ul-jadīd’), but the force of a modernist movement was given to Muslim education by the Crimean *bey* Isma^cil Gaspraly (1851–1914) (see Map 22). After studying in Moscow and visiting Paris and Istanbul, Gaspraly returned to Crimea aiming to inspire a cultural reawakening among his compatriots. In 1883 he founded the newspaper *Terjüman* ('Interpreter') to propagandize reformed Muslim schools with a 'new method' of teaching Arabic to facilitate intellectual study of the Koran, and a curriculum including secular subjects. As *jadid*ism spread, many such schools appeared in Muslim regions of Russia; by 1905 they predominated in towns and by 1916 totalled more than 5,000.[123]

Gaspraly's ultimate aim was the cultural unification of all Turkic-speaking peoples, starting with linguistic standardization through a common Turkic language (Türki) based on Ottoman Turkish, but simplified by reducing Arabic and Persian elements. He believed this would bring about the pan-Turkic ideal of 'unity in language, thought and action' (Turkish *dilde, fikirde, iste birlik*), and indeed it was adopted by most Crimean, Volga Tatar and Turkestan periodicals.[124]

Another sign of Tatar 'modernism' was the appearance of secular literature based on European models. By the 1890s there were novels and plays in Tatar, and by 1910 at least a dozen writers were active. One popular theme was the question of women's rights in relation to Muslim society and *shari^cah*. Tatar women were already less oppressed than those of Turkestan, and had largely abandoned the veil; some were active in intellectual movements, particularly Möhlisa Bobi, the head of a *madrasah* for girls, and Mahbubjamal Akchurina, who devoted herself to social work and writing realistic stories echoing such Russian writers as Lev Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov.[125]

At the beginning of the twentieth century *jadid*ism and pan-Turkism became the touchstones of political conviction among Russia's Muslims: their supporters stood for reform, if not revolution. Among Tatar activists the most influential were ^{c}Abdullah and ^{c}Ubaidullah Bobi, who founded two *madrasah*s which, after 1905, were unique in engaging with current social and political problems. These were, of course, closed by the Russian authorities, their staff and students were arrested, and the Bobi brothers spent three years in Siberian exile.[126]

Although repercussions of the 1905 Russian Revolution in Kazan were relatively limited and, since only one-tenth of Kazan's population were Tatars, political organizations involved very few Tatars, an event of such magnitude inevitably created a deep impression on the Tatars, including the 19-year-old poet ^{c}Abdullah Tukai, who wrote about liberty, the abolition of censorship and equality of rights for Tatars and Russians.[127] Students at the Tatar teachers' college participated in Russian students' meetings, and after its closure by the authorities a socialist group was founded which published the newspaper *Azat Khalyk* (*The Free People*) demanding 'freedom for the people and land for the peasants'.[128]

Despite the geographical and political barriers hampering contacts between the population of the Caucasus and their ethnic and religious counterparts elsewhere in the Russian Empire, awareness of recent social and political developments in Kazan, Crimea and Turkey reached the

Muslim peoples of Caucasia. No doubt the carriers of such news included prosperous Azerbaijani businessmen in their travels. Considerable changes had taken place in Azerbaijanian society since 1800. As elsewhere, education had been limited to Koranic *mekteb*s, but in 1830 the first of nine Russian-language secular schools was opened in Shusha (Karabagh), and by 1847 there was even a girls' school in Shamakha. However, it was not until the 1870s that schools with instruction in Azerbaijani appeared. Much was done for the secularization of education by the prominent Azerbaijani writer Mirza Fath-Ali Akhundzadä; a 'Tatar' department was opened in the Georgian teachers' seminary in Gori in 1879; and developments in Baku included a Russo-Azerbaijanian college in 1887 and a women's college in 1896.[129]

The development of Azerbaijanian language and literature was still complicated by the fact that for centuries Azerbaijan had been part of Persia, and its written language was Farsi. Nevertheless, the use of Azerbaijani Turkic as a literary medium had grown over the centuries, and it received an important stimulus in the eighteenth century from the poet Mollah Panakh Vagif, vizier to the khan of Karabagh. Vagif's achievement in reducing excessive Persianisms and Arabic vocabulary in Azerbaijani Turkish was continued in the nineteenth century by such writers as ^{c}Abbas Quli-Agha Bakikhan(ov), who compiled the first history of Azerbaijan, and by Akhundzadä. The latter, an outstanding public figure, wrote satirical comedies (e.g. *Mollah Ibrahim Khalil*), as well as stories and philosophical treatises, and his works contributed greatly to the development of secular thought in Islamic countries. Later in the century the first novels and tragedy in Azerbaijanian were written by Nariman Kerbalay Najaf-Oghlu Nariman(ov), an SD socialist who played a considerable part in the creation of the subsequent communist régime in Azerbaijan.

Some theatrical performances had been given in Shusha and Shamakha, but it was Akhundzadä's plays – performed first in Russian in Tbilisi – that laid the foundation of Azerbaijani drama, leading to the opening of Taghiyev's theatre in Baku in 1873 (see Map 22). It was also in Tbilisi that the first Azerbaijani newspaper – an edition of the *Tiflis Gazette* – appeared in 1832. Later newspapers and magazines influential in the growth of national consciousness included *Äkinchi* (*The Ploughman*), a populist paper representing Sunnite views, *Kaspiy*, *Käshkül* (*Begging-Bowl*) and the satirical magazine *Molla Nasreddin* (1906–30) which became popular throughout the Middle East. In the second half of the nineteenth century the potent new ideas of pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism spread to Azerbaijan, as did Gaspraly's secular 'new method' (*usulu jadid*), with financial support from Taghiyev.[130]

Inevitably, during Russia's 1905 Revolution, when the Tatar liberal intelligentsia formed various committees, there was much discussion of pan-Islamic politics. The Siberian Tatar magnate ᶜAbdurrashid Ibrahimov discussed with Russian liberals and officials ways of improving conditions for Muslims, and mustered support for the presentation of their grievances to the government. It was the assertion by Tatar students that political organization was essential that led to the convening of an All-Russian Muslim Congress. Between August 1905 and June 1914 four such congresses were held, and attracted delegates from all Muslim communities in the Russian Empire. The first Congress (unauthorized by St Petersburg and therefore held on a steamship on the Volga) was the most pan-Islamic, with the Crimean Gaspraly, the Azerbaijani Topchybashy and the Volga Tatar Akchura as its leaders. In 1906 during the third Muslim Congress, held in St Petersburg as preparations were being made for Russia's third State Duma (parliament) elections, a Muslim political party, Unanimity (Ittifaq), was formed, with policies close to those of the Russian Constitutional Democrats (KDs). In Russia's third and fourth Dumas, with much-reduced representation of Muslims (only six deputies, of whom five were Volga Tatars), the latter, being the most highly educated and politically active, were the acknowledged leaders in 'Russian' Muslim politics. The most that their deputies could do, however, was to protest about the repressive measures employed by the government from 1907 onward against Muslim culture and its leaders on the pretext of combating 'pan-Islamism'.[131]

The Caucasus in the Russian Empire

A century of Russian occupation had changed the Caucasus radically: Georgia was no longer divided between Turkey and Persia, and had ceased to be the victim of their depredations, while the Armenians received the hope that they might again become free and independent. For the Muslim peoples, Russian conquest on the one hand had brought to the northern Azerbaijanis separation from Persia, a degree of Europeanization and a growing sense of their own nationality, but on the other hand it brought ruthless oppression to the Daghestanis and Chechens, and persecution and near-extinction to the Circassians. Thus, whatever other fate the Muslims of the Caucasus might have experienced without annexation to Russia, few of them had much reason to rejoice in their position as subject peoples within its empire. Russia's emperors and generals had demonstrated absolute mercilessness in crushing resistance in the Caucasus, and their contempt for its non-Christian inhabitants, whom they dismissed as 'savages'.

Up to the 1860s, the profit gained by the Russian state from possession of the Caucasus had been small and the expenditure enormous, so that its annexation to the empire could be justified only by strategic considerations. Georgia, in its key situation beyond the Caucasus range and with its Christian allegiance, was the doorway to further Russian expansion in the Middle East. From the Caucasus the Russians could attack Turkey from the east, at the same time as they advanced south-westward from the Danube towards Constantinople. Eastward across the Caspian they might infiltrate through Central Asia and Persia towards India, where Britain's near-monopoly of trade evoked Russian envy. By the beginning of the twentieth century, moreover, mineral oil had given great commercial importance not only to the Caspian field, but also to smaller sources in Chechenia (Groznyy) and Circassia (Maykop),[132] although as yet neither their full potential value, nor the possibility of local nationalist claims to them were anticipated.

After less than two centuries of immigration from the north, the population of the Caucasus by 1900 included 1.8 million Russians, 1.3 million Ukrainians and 19,600 Belorussians – altogether 3.2 million East Slavs within a total population of 9.3 million. The largest indigenous peoples were what the Russians called ‘Tatars’ (largely Azerbaijanis – 1.5 million), Georgians (1.4 million) and Armenians (1.1 million). In Daghestan and North Caucasus native peoples totalled about 1.2 million,[133] but an equally conspicuous element here was the large number of Cossacks. In what were now designated as Russia's Kuban, Stavropol and Terek provinces, with a total population of 3.5 million people (only about 900,000 of them indigenous), Cossacks of the Kuban and Terek Hosts numbered 864,588 persons (men, women and children) – almost 25%.[134] Although Russian and

Ukrainian in origin, these members of Russia's military caste formed an ethnic group with their own traditions, convictions, and attitudes towards the native peoples, which would play an important part in the turbulent events of the twentieth century.

[1] See Forsyth, *Peoples of Siberia*, pp. 2–3.

[2] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, pp. 139–42, 164–6, 173, 186–7, 222; Ware, *Orthodox Church*, pp. 112–14.

[3] P. I. Pestel, *Russkaya Pravda*, in M. N. Pokrovskiy, ed., *Vosstaniye dekabristov: materialy i dokumenty*, 12 vols., Moscow, 1925–69, vol. VII, pp. 113–209; abridged translation in M. Raeff, *The Decembrist Movement*, Englewood Cliffs, 1966, pp. 124–56.

[4] M. Yu. Lermontov, *The Hero of Our Time, [chapter 1]. Cf. Tolkovyy slovar russkogo yazyka*, edited by D. N. Ushakov, 4 vols., Moscow, 1935–40, vol. I, p. 16.

[5] N. Ya. Danilevskiy, *Rossiya i Yevropa: vzglyad na kulturnya i politicheskiya otnosheniya slavyanskogo mira k germano-romanskomu*, 5th edn, St Petersburg, 1889, pp. 21–39, 43, 120, 131, 200–2, 239–40, 298–9, 416, 419, 516–56, 931; F. M. Dostoyevskiy, *The Diary of a Writer*, translated by B. Brasol, 2 vols., New York, 1949, pp. 360–3, 376–8, 423–5, 433–42, 626–8, 637–51, 660–4, 666–71, 779–80, 802, 902–6, 1043–4, 1048–9.

[6] Muslims were in a unique category, whether they were illiterate nomads or educated city-dwellers: until 1917 they

were administered according to ‘a collection of laws filling almost twenty double-columned pages with 330 articles… reflect[ing] no…such distinctions…Muslims, like Jews, were deemed alien and less than fully trustworthy, and they suffered for it’ (E. J. Lazzerini, ‘Muslims in Russia and the Soviet Union’, in *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, 60 vols., 1976–2000, vol. XXIV, p. 5).

[7] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXVII, pp. 170–1.

[8] G. Simon, ‘Church, state and society’, in G. Katkov, *et al.*, eds., *Russia Enters the Twentieth Century, 1894–1917*, London, 1971, pp. 208–9.

[9] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXVII, *Rossiya*, pp. 170–1, 546; vol. XXXI, p. 380; Simon, ‘Church, state and society’, pp. 206–12. In practice, despite this decree, many of the religious discriminatory laws remained in force up to 1917: Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, p. 798; H. Seton-Watson, *The Decline of Imperial Russia, 1855–1914*, London, 1964, p. 265.

[10] Lang, *Last Years*, p. 269.

[11] Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 89, 251; N. K. Gvosdev, ‘The Russian Empire and the Georgian Orthodox Church in the first decades of imperial rule, 1801–1830’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1995, 14, pp. 410–19; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. I, p. 393; vol. II, pp. 10–12; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 179–85, 205–21, 232–3, 236–56; Mgaloblishvili, *Po doroge druzhby*, pp. 13–14; Suny, *Making*, pp. 57–9, 63–5, 82–5.

[12] Doubtless it was because this was the only colony in the Russian Empire with an Orthodox Christian king that 'the presence of any other royal power besides that of the [Russian] Emperor could not be tolerated': Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 232, 256.

[13] Suny, *Making*, pp. 66–8.

[14] E. Akhaltaksi, 'Report from Georgia: On the Meskhetians', *Nationalities Papers*, 1996, vol. 24, no. 2, p. 303.

[15] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 856.

[16] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. 84–8; Berdzenishvili, *et al*., *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 421–39; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 253–7, 261–5, 269–70; Suny, *Making*, pp. 64, 70.

[17] A. Bennigsen and C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, 'Musulmans et missions orthodoxes en Russie avant 1917: essai de bibliographie critique', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 1972, vol. 13, pp. 95–7; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, vol. I, pp. 155–9.

[18] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], p. 159.

[19] *Ibid*., [vol. I], pp. 159–61, 177. The first grammar of Osetian in the Russian alphabet was compiled by the Swedish–Finnish scholar Andreas Sjögren in 1844.

[20] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXII, p. 263; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], pp. 132–8, 149; K. Khetagurov,

Proza: rasskaz, etnografichesliy ocherk, statyi, Moscow, 1987, pp. 228–9.

[21] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], pp. 105–6, 108, 132–8, 162–8, 172, 185–6; Khetagurov, *Proza*, pp. 168–9, 236–7; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 327; Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, p. 267.

[22] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], pp. 137–8, 148, 169, 231–2; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, pp. 670–1; W. Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, London, 1953, p. 191; Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 75, 133.

[23] A. Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich*, 2nd, revised edn, Munich, 1993, p. 220; Khetagurov, *Proza*, pp. 85–6, 109–10, 117, 154, 222, 234–6. In 1899 there were only three schools for mountain peoples for the whole population (500,000) of Kabarda, Balkaria, Chechenia and Ingushia: Khetagurov, *Proza*, pp. 181–2.

[24] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXII, p. 264.

[25] A. Bennigsen and C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La presse et le mouvement national chez les Musulmans de Russie avant 1920*, Paris, 1964, pp. 134–7; Khetagurov, *Proza*; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 192; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 135–6, 338; Wixman, *Language Aspects*, p. 116. The first-mentioned work shows that a proposal for a Kumuk newspaper in Daghestan was made in 1913, but was rejected by the Russian authorities.

[26] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. 67–76, 81–4, 88–90, 154–9, 164–76; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 97–8;

Hovanissian, *Road to Independence*, p. 7; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 191–4, 196, 202; T. Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1904–1920: the Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community*, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 4–7.

[27] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. 57–60; Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. I, p. 541; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 89–90; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, pp. 10–12, 14–16, 25–6; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 220–3, 227–32, 236–7.

[28] The Russians' name for them derives from the village of Chechen on the Sunzha tributary Argun: I. Yu. Aliroyev, *Yazyk, istoriya i kultura vaynakhov*, Groznyy, 1990, p. 13; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 345; a small but useful introduction to their language is N. Awde and M. Galayev, *Chechen–English and English–Chechen Dictionary and Phrasebook*, London, 1997.

[29] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, p. xxxv; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 372, 379–80; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 364–5.

[30] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. xxxvii, 106.

[31] Nevertheless, during his decade as commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, 1816–27, Yermolov gained the reputation – still cited in his favour today – of a man who 'respected' Islam. In 1860 Shamil, newly interned in Russia, made his first priority a visit to pay his respects to Yermolov, who was himself descended from a Golden Horde Tatar prince, Arslan Murza Yermol, who defected to the Russians and converted to Orthodoxy in 1506. It was typical of officers of such descent to be particularly harsh in their treatment of non-

Christian native peoples of Russia's colonies: D. Yu. Arapov, ‘A. P. Yermolov i musulmanskiy mir Kavkaza’, *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, ser. 8, Istoriya, 2001, no. 6, pp. 51–60; A. H. Khalikov, *500 russkikh familiy bulgarotatarskogo proiskhozhdeniya/Bolgar-tatar chyghyshly 500 rus familiyase*, Kazan, 1992, pp. 84–5.

[32] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. 106–13, 123–6, 129–53, 262–75; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, pp. 67, 69, 79–83, 85.

[33] For the origin of Islamic missionarism from the Fatimid dynasty and its links with Sufism, see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th edn, vol. IV, pp. 697–8.

[34] One of the names of Allah, meaning ‘universal, all-embracing’: Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 197–8; Arabic dictionary.

[35] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. 47–51, 55–6, 230–4, 237–44, 251–9, 261–2, 276–88; A. Bennigsen and S. E. Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union*, Berkeley, 1985, pp. 2–10, 18–24, 70–1, 77–83; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. IV, pp. 667–71 (‘Ṭariḳa’), pp. 681–5 (‘Taṣawwuf’); *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, pp. 86–90; ‘Nart’,‘The life of Mansur: great independence fighter of the Caucasian mountain people’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1991, 10, 1/2, pp. 81–92.

[36] The Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov participated in this battle and won a medal for courage; he depicted it realistically in his poem *Valerik*: M. Yu. Lermontov, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy*, Moscow, 1953, vol. I, pp. 305–10. In a note on p. 398 the editor praises the ‘enormous popularity’

of General Yermolov among his troops, while ignoring the Chechens’ opinion, but Lermontov himself allows the laconic comment of his Chechen comrade to suggest more complex feelings.

[37] Shamil's second raid on the Alazani valley in 1854 is remembered in Georgia: having been defeated at Shildi by Prince Davit Cḥavcḥavadze, Shamil swooped on the latter's estate at Tsinandali and abducted on horseback his wife and sister-in-law and their young children, one of whom fell among the horses and was trampled to death; after a 90-mile ride over mountain tracks they were held in the village of Vedeno in Chechenia for eight months until Shamil traded them for his son, who had been held hostage by the Russians for 16 years: W. E. D. Allen and P. Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: a History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828–1921*, Cambridge, 1953, pp. 74–5, 569.

[38] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 168; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, pp. 90–107.

[39] It is said that mutual respect existed between Russia's conqueror of the Caucasus, General Yermolov, and the defeated Shamil, but perhaps a deeper admiration for the mountain peoples’ struggle is expressed by Lev Tolstoy in his story about the heroic death in a stand against the invaders put up by Shamil's lieutenant, *Hajji Murat*.

[40] Akiner, *Islamic Peoples*, pp. 251–2; Kolarz, *Religion*, p. 402.

[41] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. 104–5, etc. *passim*; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XII, p. 167; vol. XIII, p. 838;

Istoriya Dagestana, vol. II, pp. 107–12, 122–3, 144–9.

[42] Tolstoy, *Kazaki*, ch. 4.

[43] ‘Rebel’: the word in the original is *abrek* (see Chapter 10, n. 87).

[44] Tolstoy, *Kazaki*, chs. 40, 41.

[45] Namitok, ‘“Voluntary” adherence of Kabarda’, p. 27; Traho, ‘Circassians’, p. 20. A late twentieth-century work on the Russian conquest of Circassia from Kabarda-Balkaria university explains that, despite numerous Russian publications before and after 1917 which, ‘one might expect, would allow us to come to some conclusions…up to the present no works…exist which present an authentic view of the history of the mountain peoples’ fight for freedom’. With few exceptions ‘it is impossible to name a single work which does not suffer from distortions and departures from historical truth…The short-lived achievements [of the immediate post-Stalin period]…were succeeded, at best, by stagnation, and at worst, by blatant falsification’: A. Kh. Bizhev, ‘Borba severo-kavkazskikh adygov protiv voyenno-kolonizatsionnoy politiki tsarizma (1774–1864 gg.)’, in Gugov, *et al*., eds., *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba*, p. 86.

[46] Dzamikhov, ‘Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy’, p. 113.

[47] *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 457–8; Traho, ‘Circassians’, pp. 20–3, 30.

[48] Bizhev, ‘Borba severo-kavkazskikh adygov’, p. 91.

[49] Dzamikhov, ‘Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy’, pp. 113–14; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 454–7, 458; ‘Nart’, ‘Life of Mansur’, pp. 86–91; Traho, ‘Circassians’, pp. 22–3. Mansur was imprisoned in Schlüsselburg castle on Lake Ladoga, where he died four years later.

[50] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, p. 54; Bizhev, ‘Borba severo-kavkazskikh adygov’, pp. 92–6; Dzamikhov, ‘Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy’, pp. 114–15; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XV, pp. 588–9; vol. XVII, p. 705; vol. XXXVIII, pp. 658–61; *Istoriya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, [vol. I], pp. 456–9, 462; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 283–6; Namitok, ‘“Voluntary” adherence of Kabarda’, pp. 29–30; Traho, ‘Circassians’, pp. 25, 29.

[51] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 199–200.

[52] To celebrate this victory (and make some gesture of honouring the peoples of the Caucasus) Tsar Nicholas I sanctioned the formation in St Petersburg of ‘the Emperor's Personal Escort of Caucasian Mountain Natives’, subsequently augmented by a detachment of distinguished Cossacks of the Caucasus Line, and another of ‘Lezgis’ (Daghestanis) and officers of the Transcaucasian Muslim Cavalry: *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXX, ‘Sobstvennyy Yego Velichestva konvoy’.

[53] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. XXX, col. 412; vol. XXXI, col. 477; Dzamikhov, ‘Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy’, pp. 115–20; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, pp. 856–7; *Istoriya Kabardy*, p. 82; Namitok, ‘“Voluntary” adherence of

Kabarda’, pp. 30–1; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 97; Traho, ‘Circassians’, pp. 23–5, 28–9. *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 288–9, denies that the Russians raided the Karachays.

[54] In Lordkipanidze, *Georgia in the XI–XII Centuries*, p. 180, Abkhazia is called ‘western Georgia’ with no mention of a separate Abkhazian people and language.

[55] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 213–16.

[56] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. I, col. 112; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 101; Lakoba, ‘History: 18th century–1917’, pp. 67–79; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 132–41; A. I. Pershits, *Abaziny: istoriko-etnograficheskiy ocherk*, Cherkessk, 1989, pp. 21–9; Traho, ‘Circassians’, p. 37; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. IV, *Iberiys ko-kavkazskiye yazyki*, p. 101.

[57] Cited by Bizhev, ‘Borba severo-kavkazskikh adygov’, p. 99, from Prince Shcherbatov's biography of General I. Paskevich.

[58] Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*, pp. 347–8; Bizhev, ‘Borba severo-kavkazskikh adygov’, pp. 96–7, 99–100; A. Kh. Kasumov, ‘Severnyy Kavkaz v sisteme mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy v 30–60-kh gg. XIX veka’, in Gugov, *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba*, pp. 29–36; H. Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801–1917*, Oxford, 1967, pp. 304–5; E. Spenser, *Travels in the Western Caucasus, including a Tour through Imeritia, Mingrelia, Turkey, Moldavia, Galicia, Silesia and Moravia, in 1836*, 2 vols., London, 1838, vol. I, pp. i–iii, etc.; Traho, ‘Circassians’, pp. 27–8, 30–2, 41.

[59] Dzamikhov, 'Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba Kabardy', p. 120; D.A.-A. Khozhayev, 'Starshiy naib Shamilya Muhammad-Mirza Anzorov (k voprosu o kabardinskikh mukhadzhirakh v Chechne v 40–50-kh gg. XIX v.)', in Gugov, *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba*, pp. 210–11; Traho, 'Circassians', p. 37.

[60] Bizhev, 'Borba severo-kavkazskikh adygov', pp. 104–7; *Ocherki istorii Adygei*, 2 vols., Maykop, 1957–81, vol. I, pp. 341–53, 366–73.

[61] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. XXXI, col. 477; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 861; vol. XXXVIII, pp. 644–8, 653, 658, 660; Lakoba, 'History: Eighteenth Century to 1917', pp. 80–1; *Ocherki istorii Adygei*, vol. I, pp. 341–2, 345–54, 371–3; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 295–9; Traho, 'Circassians', pp. 29, 37–42.

[62] An Abkhaz specialist states that there were five waves of expulsion – the 1840s, 1853–5, 1864, 1866 and 1877–8: Sh. D. Inal-ipa, 'Ob izmenenii etnicheskoy situatsii v Abkhazii v XIX–nachale XX v.', *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1990, no. 1, pp. 43–4.

[63] A low estimate is c. 400,000: *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXXVIII, p. 581; a high one is 595,000, quoted from an Ottoman source in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. II, p. 25; the very much higher figure attributed by Traho, 'Circassians', p. 45, in a quotation presumably from A. P. Berzhe, 'Vyseleniye gortsev s Kavkaza v 1858–1865 gg.', *Russkaya Starina*, 1882, vol. XXXIII, is possibly a mistake in translation from Russian. The number of descendants of

Osetian exiles in Turkey in 1990 was estimated to be 4,000–8,000.

[64] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 861; vol. XXXVIII, pp. 651–2, 654, 657; A. H. and H. A. Kasumov, *Genotsid adygov: iz istorii borby adygov za nezavisimost v XIX veke*, Nalchik, 1992, pp. 147–73; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 99; Gugov, *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba*, pp. 3–11, 15–26, 68–85, 130–7, etc.; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 306–7; Traho, ‘Circassians’, pp. 41, 44–6, 49, 62 n.37.

[65] Tokarev, *Etnografiya*, p. 245; similarly in *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 98–9. A more credible account is given in *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 301–6.

[66] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. I, cols. 112–13; vol. XXXI, col. 477; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 101; Lakoba, ‘History: Eighteenth Century to 1917’, pp. 81–3; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 377–8.

[67] T. Kh. Kumykov, ‘Mukhadzhirstvo v istorii gorskikh narodov Severnogo Kavkaza’, in Gugov, *et al.*, eds., *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba*, p. 19; Traho, *Cherkesy*, p. 38 n. 37; V. S. Uarziati, ‘Etnokulturnaya evolyutsiya osetin-mukhadzhirov’, in Gugov, *et al.*, eds., *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba*, pp. 213–14.

[68] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXXI, pp. 380–1; Kumykov, ‘Mukhadzhirstvo’, p. 19.

[69] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. I, col. 113; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 101;

Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar, vol. XXXII, p. 150; vol. XXXIV, p. 158; Inal-Ipa, 'Ob izmenenii etnicheskoy situatsii', pp. 44–6; Lakoba, 'History: Eighteenth Century to 1917', pp. 82–5; D. Müller, 'Demography: ethno-demographic history, 1886–1989', in Hewitt, ed., *Abkhazians*, pp. 218–23; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 378; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, p. 469; Traho, 'Circassians', p. 50.

[70] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. II, p. 88; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, pp. 150–62.

[71] A. Krausse, *Russia in Asia: a Record and a Study, 1558–1899*, 2nd edn, London, 1900, pp. 68–77, 346–53; Platonov, *Sokrashchennyy kurs*, p. 410; M. Saray, 'Russo-Turkmen relations up to 1874', *Central Asian Survey*, 1984, 3, 4, pp. 35–9, 41; G. Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, London, 1964, pp. 58–60.

[72] F. Burnaby, *A Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia*, London, 1877 (reprint with Introduction by E. Newby, 1983), p. 416; J. Malcolm, *The History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present Time*, 2 vols., London, 1829, vol. II, p. 158 and note b; C. Marvin, *The Eye-Witnesses' Account of the Disastrous Russian Campaign against the Akhal Tekke Turcomans*, London, 1880, pp. 39–41; *Narody mira*, p. 458; *Narody Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana*, vol. II, pp. 13–15, 18, 20–1; A. M. Pankratova, *Istoriya SSSR: uchebnik dlya 9 klassa sredney shkoly*, 16th edn, Moscow, 1957, vol. II, p. 165; Saray, 'Russo-Turkmen relations', p. 26; Sykes, *History of Persia*, vol. II, pp. 358–9; Wheeler, *Soviet Central Asia*, pp. 10, 13.

[73] *Aziatskaya Rossiya: lyudi i poryadki za Uralom. Izdaniye pereselencheskogo upravleniya*, 3 vols., 1914, vol. I, p. 37;

Lord Nathaniel Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, London, 1889, p. 73; F. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914*, New Haven, 1968, p. 12; Krausse, *Russia in Asia*, p. 119; Marvin, *Eye-Witnesses' Account*, pp. 12–27, 52, 60–3, 99–271; Saray, 'Russo-Turkmen relations', pp. 24, 27–31.

[74] Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 37–41, 78–83.

[75] Baedeker, *Russia*, pp. 364, 367, 506, 509–10, 522; I. N. Westwood, *A History of Russian Railways*, London, 1964, pp. 125–7. The wider purpose of the Central Asian railway was seen by the British, with some justification, as a military one – to open up a Russian route to India: see Krausse, *Russia in Asia*, pp. 198–208.

[76] Baedeker, *Russia*, pp. 465–7; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, pp. 771–2; vol. III, p. 168; vol. XI, pp. 617, 619, 620; vol. XIII, p. 838; vol. XVI, p. 919; vol. XVII, pp. 132, 135; vol. XIX, p. 95; vol. XXI, pp. 380, 431; vol. XXIX, p. 69; vol. XXXI, p. 393; vol. XXXIII, pp. 87, 264, 267–8, 270; vol. XXXVIII, p. 652; vol. XXXIX, p. 460; vol. XL, pp. 25–6; vol. XLI, pp. 12, 15; I. Fleischhauer and B. Pinkus, *The Soviet Germans Past and Present*, London, 1986, pp. 13, 21, 69, 77–8; Haxthausen-Abbenburg, *Transcaucasia*, pp. 45, 49–54; Lang, *Last Years*, p. 203.

[77] Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, p. 356; Baramidze, *et al.*, *Istoriya gruzinskoy literatury*, pp. 134–5; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. IX, p. 800; Haxthausen-Abbenburg, *Transcaucasia*, pp. 97–8; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 259, 277.

[78] Baramidze, *et al.*, *Istoriya gruzinskoy literatury*, pp. 139–41, 145–6, 152–4, 164–6, 167–70, 189–92, 212–19; I. Chavchavadze, *Stikhi, poemy, povesti, rasskazy*, Tbilisi, 1987, p. 268; Lang, *Last Years*, pp. 278–82; Suny, *Making*, pp. 124–32; V. Urushadze, *Anthology of Georgian Poetry*, Tbilisi, 1958, p. 255.

[79] Suny, *Making*, pp. 22, 42–4, 46–7.

[80] Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 100; Suny, *Making*, pp. 124–6.

[81] D. Qipiani, quoted by Suny, *Making*, pp. 99–100.

[82] Suny, *Making*, pp. 98–108.

[83] *Ibid*., pp. 108–9.

[84] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, p. 1078; Suny, *Making*, pp. 114–19, 130, 131, 137–8, 145, 164.

[85] Suny, *Making*, pp. 73, 85, 156–7, 166–7.

[86] *Ibid*., pp. 146, 148–57, 161–3.

[87] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 537.

[88] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo naroda*, pp. 225–7.

[89] Kh. Abovyan, *Rany Armenii*, Yerevan, 1984, pp. 5, 263–6; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXXIII, pp. 267–8; Lang,

Armenia, pp. 278, 282; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 224–9.

[90] Lang, *Armenians*, pp. 7–8.

[91] Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 282, 286; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 188, 219, 228.

[92] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 10.

[93] M. J. Arlen, *Passage to Ararat*, London, 1976, pp. 158, 239; Balakyan, *Burning Tigris*, pp. 1–216; A. Emin, *Turkey in the World War*, New Haven, 1930, pp. 212–23; D. Hotham, *The Turks*, London, 1972, pp. 182–6; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 27–30; Lang, *Armenians*, pp. 1–38; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 209–13, 219–23, 257–8, 264–8.

[94] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 229–32.

[95] E.g. the anonymous *Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (1912–1926)*, Istanbul, 1984.

[96] Balakyan, *Burning Tigris*, pp. 219–391; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 48–57.

[97] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 48.

[98] G. Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union*, final edn, London, 1992, pp. 388–9.

[99] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. xix.

[100] *Philologiae turkicae fundamenta*, edited by J. Deny, K. Grønbech, H. Scheel and Z. V. Togan, 2 vols., Wiesbaden, 1959, pp. 190, 284–306, and folding map.

[101] Cited in A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 281.

[102] Hotham, *The Turks*, pp. 8–9.

[103] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 35; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 71–2. In the first half of the nineteenth century, nomads formed one-third of the rural population of Azerbaijan, but their numbers decreased sharply to between 4% and 8%.

[104] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXXIX, p. 459; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 98–103; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 7, 10–14; Unbegaun, *Russian Surnames*, pp. 389–98.

[105] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 21–4, 31, 33–7, 62; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, pp. 773–4; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 102, 107; Rizvanov and Rizvanov, *Istoriya lezgin*, p. 29; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 15–16, 20–3.

[106] A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 74, 120–2, 128–9, 134, 260–5, 273–5, 279–82.

[107] *A Persian-Russian Dictionary* includes: ??? ā*zär* 'fire'; ā*zärpäräst*ī 'Fire-worship, Zoroastrianism'; ā*zärbaij*ā*n* ????????

‘Azerbaijan’; ā*zäri* ???? ‘fiery’; ā*zäri* ‘language spoken in Iranian Azerbaijan before Turkification’; [as neologism or linguistic term] ā*zäri* ‘the Azerbaijani language’: *Persidsko-russkiy slovar*, vol. I, pp. 58, 59, *Appendix of neologisms*, p. 783; vol. II, p. 754. See also *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. IV, *Iberiysko-kavkaz*ṡ*kiye yazyki*, p. 9.

[108] A. Bennigsen and C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, London, 1967, pp. 39–40.

[109] E. J. Lazzerini, ‘*Tatarovedeniye* and the “new historiography” in the Soviet Union: revising the interpretation of the Tatar--Russian relationship’, *Slavic Review*, 1981, 40, pp. 630–2.

[110] T. Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan: teoriya i praktika Leninskoy natsionalnoy politiki*, London, 1974, p. 34; K. Fuchs, *Kazanskiye tatary v statisticheskom i etnograficheskom otnosheniyakh; Kratkaya istoriya goroda Kazani* [reprint of Kazan, 1844], Kazan, 1991, p. 126.

[111] G. M. Hisamutdinov and N. I. Vorobyov, eds., *Tatary srednego Povolzhya*, Moscow, 1967, p. 380.

[112] S. Aini, *Bukhara (vospominaniya)*, translated from Tajik, Dushanbe, 1980, pp. 138–43; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, p. 26; J. Validov [Validi], *Ocherk istorii obrazovannosti i literatury tatar (do revolyutsii 1917 g.)* [reprint of Moscow, 1923] with introduction, bibliography and biobibliographies, Oxford, 1986, pp. 35, 40–1, 44–9.

[113] *Istoriya Tatarskogo ASSR*, 2 vols., Kazan, 1955–6, vol. I, p. 280.

[114] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, p. 32; Karimullin, *U istokov tatarskoy knigi*, pp. 116–23, 180–1; A. A. Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars: a Profile in National Resistance*, Stanford, 1986, pp. 69–71. The figure of two million copies printed *annually* by mid-century, quoted in Hisamutdinov and Vorobyov, *Tatary*, p. 384, from N. Spasskiy and repeated by Davletshin and Rorlich, is improbable.

[115] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 75–80.

[116] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, p. 32; Fuchs, *Kazanskiye tatary*, pp. 132–4; M. A. Isḥaki, *Idel-Ural*, Paris, 1933 [reprint, London, 1988], pp. 30–1.

[117] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, ‘Musulmans’, pp. 69, 74, 76–7, 79, 82–3, 87; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 44–6; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 44–7.

[118] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 34, 41, 76.

[119] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 51–3; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 58–68, 199–201.

[120] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, p. 37; M. Gaynullin, *Tatarskaya literatura i publitsistika nachala XX veka*, 2nd, enlarged edn, Kazan, 1983, pp. 161–3, 281–3; C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, ‘ᶜAbdul Kayum al-Nasyri: a Tatar reformer of the nineteenth century’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1983, vol. I, no. 4, pp. 109–32; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 65–8; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 68–71, 201–3.

[121] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 38; Isḥaki, *Idel-Ural*, pp. 36–8; A. A. Rorlich, ‘Sufism in Tatarstan: deep roots and new concerns’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1983, 2, 4, pp. 42–3; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 62; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 87–9, 174, 197, 199, 204–5.

[122] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, p. 239 n. 6.

[123] *Ibid*., pp. 36, 39; I. B. Gasprinskiy, *Russkoye musulmanstvo: mysli, zametki i nablyudeniya musulmanina*, Simferopol, 1881, Oxford, 1985, pp. 5, 11–12; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 81–5.

[124] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 38–9; Gasprinskiy, *Russkoye musulmanstvo*, pp. 84–6.

[125] Gaynullin, *Tatarskaya literatura*, pp. 161–70, 177–90, 199–234, 241; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 62–4; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 131–43.

[126] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 75–6, 96–8; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 102–7, 180–1.

[127] A. Tukai, *Stikhotvoreniya, poemy i skazki*, Kazan, 1986, pp. 19–22.

[128] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 94, 105–7.

[129] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, p. 291; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 145–6; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 280; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 25, 29–30.

[130] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 34, 53–4, 174; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 28–9, 32–40; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La presse*, pp. 22–3, 27–32, 104–32; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 100–1, 253–5; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 150, 166, 172–3; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 259–77; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 24–35, 52, 56–7, 70–2.

[131] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 42–5; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, p. 56; A. Karimullin, ‘Sadri Maksudi Arsal’, *Idel*, 1991, no. 10/11, pp. 88–96; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 107–22.

[132] For a general outline of ‘Russia's’ petroleum resources at the beginning of the twentieth century see *Rossiya: yeya nastoyashcheye i proshedsheye*, St Petersburg, 1900, p. 63.

[133] These were summarized in 1897 as:

‘Other “Tatars”’ (presumably chiefly Kumuks and Karachay-Balkars)	204,561
‘Chechens’ (presumably including Ingush)	226,496
Osetians	171,127
Daghestanis:	
Avar-Andi	212,68

	0
Kürin	159,213
Dargo	130,209
Circassians (approximately)	123,200
Total	1,227,486

Census, 1897, pp. xii--xiii; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XVI, p. 919; vol. XXXVIII, p. 649.

[134] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, pp. 890, 892; vol. XVI, p. 919; vol. XXXI, p. 393; vol. XXXIII, p. 86.

10 World war and Russian revolution

Russian society, 1900–1917

Russia's last two tsars, reigning from 1881 onward, refused to countenance any change in political and social institutions. No political parties existed, and the only scope permitted for public participation in even the most modest practical improvements in local circumstances was in the rural councils – *zemstvo*s – instituted in 1864, and the equivalent town councils. Even these ‘standard-bearers of liberation’ were denied any coherent organization until the the Union of Liberation was founded in January 1904. It was the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) that showed up the country's general backwardness and inefficiency, and stimulated a surge of political protest against government suppression of public discussion about society and government, with conferences of liberals advocating freedom of the press, social reforms and freedom to form trade unions. The existing social inequalities and harsh exploitation of workers and peasants were obvious to all, as was the callous repression of minorities – in particular the Jews, who were forced to move from the cities of central Russia into the towns of the south and west, and were subjected to savage pogroms by Russian racists. A crisis was reached on 9 January 1905, when industrial workers in St Petersburg, led by an Orthodox priest, gathered before the Winter Palace to present to the tsar a petition for improvements in their conditions. Their reception with rifle fire killed at least 130, and gave the name Bloody Sunday to that day.

During these last years of tsarist rule the Russian Orthodox Church (unquestionably a state church) was enormously influential, since Orthodox religious instruction was compulsory in every school. After 1900 there was ‘a growing identification between the official church and the reactionary policies of the régime’: the Church ‘came to regard the will of the monarch and the will of God…as virtually identical’ and, like Nicholas II, gave its blessing to the fiercely anti-semitic ‘Union of the Russian People’.[1]

In July 1905 liberals formed a political party, the Constitutional Democrats (nicknamed ‘Cadets’ – KDs), which formed the left wing of liberal opinion, standing for a monarchy limited by a constitution and subject to the decisions of a democratically elected parliament, which would introduce social and political reforms. Since the 1860s, hatred of Russia's oppressive régime had generated underground movements for reform, combining youthful idealism with socialist ideology derived from Karl Marx and other political theorists. Secret meetings were held by the ‘Bolshevik’ Social Democrats (SDs), proposing the mobilization of industrial workers for revolution, and the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), who championed the peasantry and terrorist methods. (Russia's minister of the interior, V. K. Pleve, was assassinated by an SR terrorist in July 1905.) During 1905 political ferment increased, with peasant revolts in some provinces, led by the SR Peasants’ Union. Strikes, initiated by bakers and printers, occurred in St Petersburg and Moscow, culminating in October with railway stoppages when activists demanded a constitution, civil liberties, a working-day limited to eight hours and freedom to hold public meetings. This became a general strike, with the participation of ‘Menshevik’[2] SDs and the St Petersburg Council (Soviet) of Workers’ Deputies, and on 13

October all commerce and industry came to a standstill. These unprecedented manifestations of discontent seemed to have influenced the government: on 17 October Nicholas II signed a manifesto stating that constitutional rule would be instituted, and that the constition would prescribe basic civil liberties.[3]

As strikes continued sporadically in St Petersburg, the whole Workers' Council was arrested in December, causing a Soldiers' Soviet to stage an armed uprising in Moscow, which was quickly crushed by troops and Cossacks. Preparations for parliamentary elections, scheduled for March 1906, were disrupted by a reassertion of the tsar-autocrat's will. Contradicting his October Manifesto, on the eve of convocation of the new parliament (the Duma) Nicholas imposed a different constitution which further reduced its powers. Citizens' rights of assembly and association were restricted, and government ministers were made responsible not to parliament, but directly to the emperor. Despite limitations already imposed on citizens' eligibility to vote, the election produced a body of deputies strongly representing Liberal (KD), Labour and peasant opinion, who demanded true parliamentary government, universal suffrage and empowerment of the Duma to frame a constitution. These demands were dismissed out of hand by Nicholas II, and the Duma was dissolved on 9 July.[4] Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin introduced severe measures of summary justice for terrorist suspects under a state-of-emergency law, and the widespread use of police spies, *agents provocateurs* and double agents. In this context the second Duma (February--June 1907) was elected, with 92 KD deputies, 34 SRs and 65 SDs, 14 other socialists, 101 of the Labour Group and only 54 conservatives. As such an assembly was too radical for Nicholas II and his ministers, this Duma too was dissolved after three months, and it was only after the franchise had been further restricted that a satisfactory right-wing majority was achieved in the third Duma, which functioned until June 1912. This was followed by the even more rightist fourth Duma which lasted from 1912 until February 1917.[5]

Economy and revolution in Azerbaijan

The political events of the early twentieth century had repercussions throughout the empire, including the Caucasus which, to the Russian government, meant above all, oil, which was shipped north from Baku to Astrakhan or piped westward to the Black Sea port of Batumi. To maintain dominance over Caucasia and transport its products, by 1914 Russia's railway network linked Moscow via Rostov-on-Don with Tikhoretskaya in North Caucasus. From there one line ran south-west to Yekaterinodar and the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk; another south-east to Vladikavkaz, the Groznyy oilfield and, via Port Petrovsk and the Daghestan coast, to Baku. Thence the ‘Transcaucasian’ railway ran west to Tbilisi and Batumi, with a branch to Kars and Sarykamysh in north-eastern Turkey.

Although Baku lay 1,600 miles south-east of St Petersburg, beyond the farthest spur of the Great Caucasus range, it had close connections with central Russia not only by rail, but also through the Caspian--Volga basin. This was Russia's greatest internal waterway, second only to the Black Sea in number of vessels and tonnage transported. It linked Moscow, Nizhniy Novgorod and other cities on the Volga not only with Baku's booming oilfield, but also with the raw cotton markets of South Caucasia and Central Asia which supplied Russia's cotton mills. The Caspian fisheries provided another important asset, especially in its shallow northern basin where around the mouths of the rivers Volga and Ural, caviar – the eggs of fish of the sturgeon and salmon families – contributed millions of rubles to the economy. Since Russia's subjugation of Turkmenistan the Caspian had become practically a Russian sea, on which all shipping, even in Persian waters, sailed under the Russian flag.[6]

In 1897, when only St Petersburg and Moscow had more than a million inhabitants each, Baku was Russia's seventeenth city in size, with a settled population of 112,250, only slightly exceeded by Rostov-on-Don and Astrakhan (119,900 and 113,000 inhabitants respectively). Baku had regular sea links with Astrakhan[7] and the smaller ports of Darband and Petrovsk on the Daghestan coast, as well as Krasnovodsk on the eastern shore of the Caspian, whence a railway ran to Central Asia. As 17,284 vessels were operating in Caspian waters in 1896, and the ports serving them required numerous dockers and shipyard workers, the total body of men employed in and around shipping was considerable.

By 1903 Baku, with 206,000 inhabitants, had become the largest city in South Caucasus. This figure did not reflect the whole population of the city and its environment of oil wells scattered over the Apsheron peninsula. In addition to Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Daghestanis, Russians and Volga Tatars, the workforce included many Persians – labourers from Persian Azerbaijan who flooded annually into Baku and adjacent industrial sites on the Caspian coast, forming about 15% of the population of Baku province. (While about 25,000 of these had visas, every year up to 100,000 more crossed illegally into this backwater of the Russian Empire.) As Russia had no legislation governing workers’ rights or safety, the circumstances under which most industrial employees lived and worked were very bad, and ‘illegal’ Persians were especially vulnerable. Their rates of pay were well below local Azerbaijanis’ earnings, and very much less than Russians received for the same work. Mass lay-offs in 1900–3 affected in particular Persian and Daghestani casual labourers, who became conspicuous as crowds of homeless people at railway stations and seaports.[8]

The prosperity of Russia's South Caucasus colony rested on minerals. Petroleum deposits extended everywhere to the south-west of Baku throughout a large area of desert and semi-desert underlain by sand, limestone and clay beds, with mud volcanoes and spontaneous flares. Next in importance was copper ore, which was mined and smelted at Kedabek in the mountains north-east of Lake Sevan. From the 1870s the capital investment for extraction came mostly from foreign sources – Nobel, Rothschild and Shell in oil, and Siemens in copper – but Azerbaijani and Armenian entrepreneurs also prospered in other industries – metallurgy, engineering, shipbuilding, shipping, fishing and textiles.[9] Azerbaijan had experienced workers’ strikes since the 1870s, but in December 1904 a big wave of unrest began, involving workers in many enterprises. This ended with the signing of the first collective bargain in the history of the Russian Empire – ‘an enormous success for the Baku workers which brought significant improvements in their conditions’.[10]

Agriculture also throve in Azerbaijan, with much trade in tobacco, cotton, grain and cattle. However, rural life was at least as backward as in central Russia, with many peasants practically enserfed to the gentry – largely the heirs of Muslim khans and beys, but also Armenian *melik*s. Despite the fact that many of these local landlords were themselves poor, ‘[o]verall, the Azerbaijani countryside remained unshaken in its tradition-bound existence characterized by closely knit village communities and little social stratification or mobility.'[11] In 1870 the 'Transcaucasian' governor-general introduced a decree similar to that which in 1861 had terminated possession of peasants as chattels by Russia's landowners, freeing them to leave the estates on which they lived, but leaving the land itself still in the lords' hereditary ownership. Small allotments of land were granted to Azerbaijani peasants for their use, but this did not transfer any land into the peasants' personal possession, and they were still obliged to cultivate the landowners' fields. (Most of the beys themselves possessed little more than 17 acres and lived quite poorly.) Nor did St Petersburg make any provision to assist 'Transcaucasian' peasants to pay for their allotted land by instalments: only the full price in cash was acceptable. Desperation arising from the injustice of the land situation led to local uprisings against the authorities and landowners by peasant bands led by daring rebels known throughout the Caucasus as *abrek*s (in Azerbaijani *gachag*s). It was not until 1912 that feudal institutions in the countryside were abolished and Azerbaijani peasants became independent farm-owners.[12]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century no province of the Russian Empire was called Azerbaijan – from Lankaran in the south to Darband in the north there were the khanates of Talish, Shirvan, Baku, Kuba, Kürin and Tabasaran. Nor was there a defined frontier between 'Russian' Azerbaijan and its northern neighbour, Daghestan. The river Samur formed the border between Kuba and Kürin, and all the mountainous country from the Apsheron peninsula as far north as the Koysu (Sulak) river was Daghestan. It was not until Russia's Caucasian War ended in 1859 that Daghestan became open to their administrative penetration. By the end of the nineteenth century Russia, having abolished the native khanates, divided and regrouped their territories and renamed them as two provinces of the empire: Baku province from Talish north to the Samur, and Daghestan from the Samur as far as the Sulak. The administrative division between these was, however, of little practical significance, since the building of the Rostov--Tiflis railway and the industrial development of Darband opened up the whole coast to Baku's economic influence. In these new outposts of the Russian Empire – where modern technology and Russian rule had come relatively recently to a predominantly Islamic ethnic and social environment – there were strong responses to Russia's 1905 Revolution. Alexander III's ‘provisional’ regulations of 1881, permitting extreme police measures, were enforced by Nicholas II from 1902 in many towns and districts of Azerbaijan, so that the imperial authorities reacted quickly in December 1904 to strikes in Baku's industrial suburbs, as well as in other towns, where many people were arrested for congregating ‘contrary to public order’. Nevertheless, strikes spread from Baku to Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi in western Georgia, the Kedabek copper mines, and the ‘Transcaucasian’ railway. There was also much violence in the Azerbaijani countryside, partly because of St Petersburg's policy of population redistribution, intended to provide settlers for sparsely populated colonial possessions while relieving overpopulation in European Russia. In Azerbaijan this led to friction, as some Russian incomers received considerably more ‘vacant’ land than the Azerbaijani peasants possessed, and rent and land-holding regulations were unclear. Azerbaijani peasants affected by this refused to carry out their obligatory service on landlords’ estates or pay their taxes. As in many other parts of the empire, peasants cut down trees in state forests, or banded together under *abrek*s for organized raids on estates and manor houses.[13]

'Bloody Sunday' in St Petersburg had its repercussions in Baku, where on 25 February 1905 the governor-general introduced courts-martial for participants in armed demonstrations against the autocracy. Politically motivated strikes began in August, and at the end of October the government of Baku was put on a war footing. The year 1905 also brought serious disturbances in Yerevan, Nakhchavan and later Ganja, assuming the form of an 'Azerbaijani--Armenian War', during which, according to one account, between 3,000 and 10,000 people were killed, and 'all the available data suggest that the Muslims, who were usually on the attack, suffered greater losses than the Armenians',[14] although others insist that 'Press coverage of the intercommunal conflicts…displayed the same anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim tenor [as that] embodied in [Russian] state policy.'[15] A number of Azerbaijani notables condemned this 'cruel and senseless feuding', but it recurred in 1906 and later,[16] and because of this ethnic violence the St Petersburg government revived the office of viceroy, to which Count I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov was appointed with the task of establishing 'peace and order in the Caucasus'.

The First World War and Russia's 1917 revolution

The conspirators who incited the communist revolution (many of whom had aliases) spent much of their time in hiding, or living abroad in various parts of western Europe, under pseudonyms. The considerable expenses of such a way of life were paid from SD party funds, derived benevolently from such rich Russian donors as Savva Morozov and N. P. Shmidt, but mainly by theft in the form of bank raids, which at times left Lenin holding sums of hundreds of thousands of rubles.[17] Their dramatic interpretation of the social situation in Russia was not the only possible one.

Historians have mainly emphasized Russia's backwardness in the early twentieth century, but in fact real progress was made in various fields. For instance, the social status of women continued to rise (at least among Russia's Christians), so that ‘By most standards [it] was at least as good in 1913 as elsewhere [in Europe].’[18] In the countryside, thanks to Stolypin's land-holding reforms, flogging of peasants was finally abolished, as was the rural commune, and by 1915 half of all peasant farms in European Russia were individual businesses, which facilitated technical modernization and the introduction of co-operatives for marketing farmers’ produce.[19] The land reforms also led to a drift of peasants from the villages to factories, in some of which accommodation and welfare arrangements were provided by the owners (although conditions in others were very rough). Health insurance for workers was introduced in 1912, and in general there was hope of the emergence of a ‘legal and democratically led labour movement similar to that of European countries’, which would be ‘led by workers rather than by professional revolutionaries’.[20] In education, ‘it was now understood that if Russia was to be a modern Great Power, the whole nation must be educated’. Universal compulsory primary education was decreed in 1908, and even introduced in many places, largely thanks to the *zemstvo*s. Consequently, by 1914 the number of primary and secondary schools had greatly increased, ‘more as a result of public energy than government action’, and it was hoped that by 1918 at least four years of schooling would become normal throughout Russia. Similarly, health services were improved by the work of the *zemstvo*s.[21]

An optimistic view of the state of contemporary Russia in 1911 was given in the ‘Preface’ to the second edition of the great Brockhaus--Yefron encyclopedia, publication of which began in that year:

> A Russia committed to self-renewal is poised to embark upon a new course of constructive scientific and industrial development and radical social reforms. Young people approaching maturity face great tasks; their enormous efforts will be dedicated to transforming the inexhaustible resources of our motherland into real assets accessible to the wide masses of our population. At all levels our population is pervaded by a passionate thirst for self-education, a belief in practical knowledge applicable directly to life, which is spreading far and wide into our country's remotest, most backward corners.[22]

Thus a mood of optimism about twentieth-century Russia's future was widespread on the eve of the First World War.

The main obstacle to progress was the emperor. Tsar Nicholas II, a naive, superstitious man of vacillating character, whose spouse had equally narrow horizons, was the embodiment of resistance to liberalization in any field of Russian life. They both believed implicitly in Nicholas's divine calling as tsar, but distrusted practically all courtiers, politicians and intellectuals, and were sentimentally convinced that ‘the common people’ represented the true virtues of ‘Russianness’. It was the vulnerability of their only son, a haemophiliac, that drew into the royal household one ‘man of the people’, Grigoriy Rasputin, a charlatan who they believed possessed spiritual powers which ameliorated the tsarevich's disease. The faith which the royal couple had in

Rasputin robbed them of credibility among most of the nobility and many others. It also warped the whole process of governing the state during the First World War, when Nicholas left St Petersburg to assume command at the front, while his wife in St Petersburg meddled in state affairs, with Rasputin as her only authority.

Germany's campaigns up to 1917 did not impinge directly on much of the territory of Russia itself, but they devastated the western provinces of the empire and their mainly non-Russian population – Poles, Belorussians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians – and by May 1916 there were 3.3 million refugees in western Russia – as a result not only of flight from the battle zones, but also of deliberate government policies. Among them were displaced Jews and thousands of Ukrainians expelled from Austrian Galicia and accommodated temporarily in Turkestan and Siberia.[23]

The February Revolution – a spontaneous uprising against the old order in February 1917 – was provoked by three disastrous years of war, but the Bolshevik extremist coup d'état eight months later subjected the country to many more years of warfare and economic disruption. This turmoil lasted approximately two more years in the Baltic, western and Volga--Ural regions; four years in Ukraine; and seven in the Caucasus. After this time of chaos, usually called the Russian Civil War, most of the empire was under the rule of what was known from 1918 as the 'Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)'.

The February Revolution and Lenin's October coup d'état

The surprising fact that a revolution was in progress in February 1917 generated a euphoric mood. Politicians, civil servants and other public figures, however, had to cope with the realities of a vast country practically without a developed political system. In Petrograd (formerly St Petersburg) a stopgap was provided by the Duma which, on the abdication of Nicholas II in March 1917, formed a Provisional Government. Composed at first largely of liberal Constitutional Democrats (KDs) and 'Octobrists', this included one Socialist Revolutionary, the lawyer A. F. Kerenskiy. As he was also vice-chairman of the Petrograd 'Soviet', or 'Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies', he became a key figure in events up to October 1917, and in July became prime minister, with a cabinet, eleven of whose eighteen members were socialists. However, Kerenskiy's high-minded conception of the revolution, and the civilized principles he and the liberal intelligentsia in general stood for, meant nothing to the Bolsheviks, so that by October 1917 he had become 'an impotent refugee marooned on a tiny island of moderation eroded by the flood tide of civil war'.[24]

In 1915, when Russia's situation in the war worsened, the central government had sanctioned the activity of unions of rural *zemstvo*s, urban councils and war industries committees as a means of organizing war supplies, aid to refugees and medical aid for the sick and wounded. By 1917 such committees existed in many cities of the empire. Representing the liberal sections of Russian society, these voluntary organizations, which brought together the most active representatives of a wide political spectrum ranging from constitutional democrats and liberals to SRs and Menshevik SDs, stood for civil liberties, equality of all citizens before the law and the democratization of central and local government through constitutional reforms.[25] As people with education, a sense of civic responsibility and generally humane attitudes, they provided experience and expertise for local administration in the tasks of reorganization and democratization of a huge country, as well as the day-to-day provision of the necessities of life. After the February Revolution this combination of political forces produced Committees of Public Order and Security, Committees of Social Organizations, People' Assemblies, etc. in many regions of Russia. Later, reacting against Lenin's October coup d'état, and in anticipation of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, there appeared Committees for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution, Committees of Public Security, etc., all dedicated to the democratization of Russia.[26] In Leninist terms, however, all these were 'bourgeois' bodies, dismissed as anti-revolutionary and serving the aims of 'international capital'.

Unfortunately, so far as the subject peoples of the empire were concerned, conservatives in the Provisional Government held to the first assertion in the 1906 constitution – 'The Russian state is one and indivisible' – thus rejecting self-determination, or at best postponing any discussion of it until the Constituent Assembly came into being. It was Ukraine that gave the lead to the non-Russian peoples in their attempts to gain independence during 1917. Many Ukrainians lived not in the Russian Empire, but in the east of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – Galicia, where some supported the pro-Austrian Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, while others favoured union with Russia (and were severely persecuted by the Vienna government).[27] The Russian authorities, being suspicious of their Ukrainian subjects, had in 1914 deported nationalist leaders, such as M. Hrushevskyy. When the Russian army occupied Galicia it closed down Ukrainian institutions, banned the Ukrainian language from schools, and persecuted the national Greek Catholic Church. Nicholas II, speaking in Lviv in 1915, made it obvious that Russia's occupation of Galicia would be permanent, and reaffirmed the dogma of ‘Russia one and indivisible’.

In Kiev Ukrainian politicians eagerly seized the opportunity offered by the February Revolution to form a separate government, the Central Council (Tsentralna Rada), which in June, with Hrushevskyy as president, declared the autonomy of Ukraine within the Russian Empire. Most of the Ukrainian people were peasants, there was practically no industrial working class, little middle class, a very small but active national intelligentsia and no Ukrainian aristocracy. As national awareness was not strong in the early stages of the revolution, in city council elections in the summer of 1917 only 20% of votes in Kiev went to Ukrainian candidates, and hardly any towns had a Ukrainian majority.[28] Consequently the nationalist movement did not at first gain much influence in Kiev, where Russian government officials had formed an Executive Committee for the maintenance of order and essential services, and the Workers’ Soviet was also mainly Russian in spirit.[29] Nevertheless, the Rada gradually won public support. Workers’ representatives were co-opted, while soldiers who now refused to fight in the ranks of the Russian army formed separate Ukrainian army units.[30] As the majority of delegates in the Rada were SDs and SRs it was in practice a socialist parliament.

The Russian Provisional Government at first ignored all requests from the Rada for recognition,[31] but in July events obliged the Russian government to accord recognition grudgingly to autonomous Ukraine. The Rada then organized a general Congress of Nationalities of the Russian

Empire in Kiev in September 1917 to discuss the conversion of Russia into a federation.[32] With typical Russian intransigence, Kerenskiy sent instructions and reprimands to Kiev, so that 'All the energy of the Ukrainian government…was spent not so much on organising their own country…as on this struggle with the Russian government.'[33] Meanwhile the Bolshevik coup took place in Petrograd on 25 October/7 November. The only part of Ukraine in which the Bolsheviks received much support was the Donets Basin coal-mining region (the Donbass), with its preponderance of Russian workers, where 'Soviet power' was quickly declared. Since Ukraine's natural resources and its access to the Black Sea (and, via Crimea, to the Caucasus) made possession of it extremely desirable to whoever ruled Russia, the Ukrainian government was caught between two fires. Kiev, largely a Russian city, provided a rallying-ground for anti-Bolshevik Russians ousted from the north, and Russian army officers played a large part in the city's changing fortunes.[34] However, the Rada now made a compact with the Bolsheviks, so that it was Ukrainian troops who gained control of the city as the Provisional Government's forces were expelled, and for a short period there was an uneasy sharing of power between the Rada and the Soviets.[35]

The Rada's decision to permit Cossacks from the Galician front to pass through Ukraine to join Kaledin's anti-Bolshevik army on the Don was Lenin's pretext for intervention in Ukraine in December 1917. Rada troops and SR delegates countered this by taking over a Congress of Deputies which the Bolsheviks had assembled in Kiev. Thereupon the Bolsheviks moved to Kharkiv, and in December their separate 'Ukrainian Congress of Soviets' proclaimed the formation of a rival 'Ukrainian People's Republic' under Lenin's appointee as 'extraordinary commissar' for Ukraine.

Rather unexpectedly, this was the Georgian Bolshevik Grigol Orjonikidze, who seized power in the Donbass, and prepared to advance on Kiev and western Ukraine. Nevertheless, the Central Rada declared the independence of its Ukrainian People's Republic on 24 January 1918,[36] and Ukraine's struggle to establish itself as a state brought four more years of vicissitudes until it was incorporated against its will into communist Russia's Union of Socialist Republics in 1921.

The example of the Ukrainian Central Rada had, however, encouraged other non-Russian peoples of the empire, especially since its stand for self-determination had been endorsed in September 1917 by a resolution of a Congress of Nationalities in Kiev, which envisaged Russia's future as a ‘federation of independent states’. After the Bolshevik coup d’état, however, there was no future for such compromises.

In contrast with the spontaneous mood of hope and renewal during much of 1918, the Bolsheviks, guided by one revolutionary with a coldly scheming mind, were poised to seize power and impose on all parts of the Russian Empire their Marxist formulae and doctrine of the historically ordained movement of humanity towards one, universal (and apparently final) social system, in the name of one of two Manichean classes – the ‘proletariat’. The achievement of this required the extermination of the other, equally nebulous, but by definition diabolic, class, the ‘bourgeoisie’ – ostensibly the world's single, unquestionable source of all evil and violence. To attain the Bolsheviks’ transcendental goal required power, and – in the words of the most morally courageous Soviet Russian historian for decades, General Dmitriy Volkogonov,

> To achieve power, the Bolsheviks became wedded forever to violence, while liberty was buried in the marriage. Lenin's address ‘To the Citizens of Russia’, following his coup, and his decrees promising peace and land say nothing about liberty as the main aim of the revolution. They were not the Bill of Rights of the English Revolution of 1689, nor the American Declaration of Independence of 1776. The Russian revolution, which formally gave the people peace and land, cunningly replaced the idea of liberty with that of the abolition of the exploitation of man by man.[37]

(a rather illusive hope, the attainment of which was equally inconceivable).

Democratization was precisely what Lenin did not wish to see in Russia: his simplistic conviction was that social democrats must pursue the aims of democracy, ‘not in a reforming way but in a revolutionary way, not by staying within the limits of bourgeois legality but by destroying these limits…by drawing the masses into positive action…so far that it becomes…a socialist revolution and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie’.[38] This, he preached apocalyptically, would be the first of a succession of revolutions culminating in world revolution. Proclaiming these fantasies, Lenin and his Bolsheviks appealed unscrupulously to the enthusiasm, especially of young people, for ‘making a complete break with the past’ and creating a new world free from exploitation, crime, corruption and other ‘relics of the past’. As one Ukrainian politician recalled, ‘Truly, we were like the gods…attempting to create a whole new world from nothing.’[39]

Through the mists of Bolshevik utopian dogma, all activities of the committees of public organizations, as well as the very raison d’être of the body on to which they projected their future hopes and allegiance – the Constituent Assembly – were deemed ‘anti-revolutionary’ irrelevancies to be destroyed by Bolshevik violence.[40]

While the Russian Provisional Government and its liberal organizations were trying to fend off chaos and preserve some normality in Russian life, the political will of the ‘lower classes’ was ostensibly voiced by the *soviet*s – councils of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies. The Petrograd Soviet was called into being by a committee of political activists, mainly SRs and Menshevik SDs, but in April 1917, after Lenin's return to Russia from Switzerland, Bolsheviks began to dominate its meetings. Thereafter the Soviets became the engine of extremist policies throughout Russia, slavishly following Lenin as the indoctrinated agents of Bolshevik power, and in January 1918 the Russian Empire was renamed the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Communist historians presented the period from the October coup to February 1918 as ‘the triumphal march of Soviet power’ when, city by city and region by region, the Bolsheviks crushed ‘counter-revolution’ – i.e. the resistance of the unconvinced middle classes. Thereafter, as local bodies recovered their senses, uprisings against the Bolsheviks ensued in many places and they were expelled. In fact, October 1917 was the beginning of the Civil War, since ‘By their very method of seizing power the Bolsheviks plunged Russia into a situation akin to civil war – which later developed into actual war.’[41]

The Constituent Assembly and anti-Bolshevik resistance

During the turmoil of 1917 the focus of public hopes for a reasonable restructuring of the Russian state and its empire was the Constituent Assembly – a representative national body conceived by the State Duma in March 1917 to effect a peaceful transition to a new political system. Planning for elections had been postponed because of political disturbances, but finally they were fixed for November 1917.[42] As the shape of Russia's future democracy would depend on the Constituent Assembly, the government formed in February 1917 was true to its provisional status in postponing decisions on many fundamental questions until the Constituent Assembly met. Nevertheless, the Provisional Government did enact many important measures, including the abolition of racial and religious discrimination, the guarantee of full civil liberties and equal rights for all citizens, and the abolition of press censorship. However, among the decisions which it postponed were some on which citizens needed urgent resolution – above all, withdrawal from the world war, which the government refused to consider because of Russia's commitment to the Western Allies to continue fighting until Germany surrendered – despite the fact that the Russian army had ceased to exist because of mass desertion. Other urgent issues postponed included the demands for autonomy made by Poland, Finland, Ukraine and other non-Russian nations of the Russian Empire, on which the Provisional Government merely reiterated the rigid formula: 'Russia one and indivisible'.[43]

Now that the self-proclaimed Bolshevik republic existed, Lenin considered the Constituent Assembly to be irrelevant, but for tactical reasons allowed it to be convoked on 5 January 1918. Its refusal to declare acceptance of 'Soviet power' made this its only session: the Assembly was disrupted by armed Bolsheviks, and all possibility of Russia receiving a democratic and non-violent régime was lost for the foreseeable future. After this fateful act the Bolshevik warlord Lev Trotskiy expressed the naively apocalyptic spirit in which the 'final, decisive battle' against 'bourgeois' evil was conceived: 'We do not disguise the fact that we used violence, but we did so in order to destroy all violence…in the struggle for the triumph of the highest ideals of humanity.'[44] Even the sardonic Fyodor Dostoyevskiy could not have expressed the moral delusion more succinctly.

The violence used by the Bolsheviks months before the proclamation of 'Red Terror' in September 1918 enjoyed the full and explicit encouragement of Lenin. After the murder of a Bolshevik commissar in June Lenin had written to a comrade: 'Only today we learned…that workers in Petrograd wanted to respond to Volodarskiy's murder with mass terror and you…restrained them. I protest strongly!…This is a time of total war. We must intensify the energy and mass character of terror against counter-revolutionaries.'[45] Thereafter Russia suffered decades of cold-blooded brutality, murder and massacre in the name of 'the revolution', as if the Bolsheviks were faithfully emulating the routine of executions carried out by their predecessors in the butcherly French Revolution – which Lenin unashamedly acknowledged as his model for the transformation of all human society.[46]

As politically conscious sections of the population realized the threat to civilized life posed by the Bolsheviks after their suppression of the Constituent Assembly, opposition to them became more active, including terrorist attacks by Socialist Revolutionaries. This resulted in the expulsion of the SRs and all other opposition groups from the soviets, the suppression of all non-Bolshevik publications and an intensification of terrorism by Lenin's ‘Extraordinary Commission for Combatting Counter-revolution and Sabotage’ (abbreviated in Russian to ‘Cheka’). As the Civil War spread, regional voluntary bodies became centres of rival factions, including those of the extreme right, and Russia fell apart into areas of internecine war: the disintegration of the empire into separate national states began.

Muslim politics and the Russian revolution

At the beginning of the First World War the non-Russian peoples of European Russia were not exempted from military conscription (as those of Turkestan and North Caucasus were). Consequently Tatars, Bashkorts and other peoples of the Volga--Ural region, like Russian peasants and workers, were obliged to leave their homes and fight on the war fronts at the behest of the Russian state. During the war the practical activity of town councils and rural *zemstvo*s was revived, and after the February Revolution, although the Provisional Government showed little intention of permitting self-determination to the peoples of the empire, its abolition of provincial governors, with the transfer of their functions to *zemstvo* chairmen, encouraged wider political involvement by citizens. One reform introduced in May 1917 was the extension of the *zemstvo* system to rural district level, giving peasant village communities, for the first time, genuine self-government free from domination by landowners and police.[47] The non-Russian peoples also availed themselves of the new freedom to hold meetings, and many conferences and congresses took place.

It was the Muslim peoples of Russia, particularly the Volga Tatars, who showed most political initiative after the

February Revolution, creating bodies to represent their views. These included: in St Petersburg, the Provisional Central Bureau for the Muslims of Russia, consisting mainly of Duma deputies, chaired by the Osetian Ahmad Tsalykatty; in Kazan the Muslim People's Council (Milli shura), which stood for a federal Russia with SD labour policy, SR land-reform policy and civil rights for non-Russian peoples. As Kazan had a comparatively large industrial working class, a Bolshevik organization had also been created there in March by an agent from Petrograd, and this remained almost exclusively Russian in its membership until Lenin's October coup. As about 960,000 Tatar and Bashkort soldiers were serving in the Russian army, those in St Petersburg created a Muslim Military Committee, led by a Menshevik officer. In April a Muslim War Council (Ḥarbi shura) was founded in Moscow, as was a Muslim Socialist Committee, led by Mullanur Vakhitov. Meanwhile in Crimea a Tatar National Conference elected a Muslim Executive Committee and founded a National Party (Milli fırka), combining SR sympathies with support for pan-Turkism. The Kazan Tatars maintained their role as the leaders of the movement for national self-determination among the Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire, which they asserted by removing the double-headed eagle from the Söembikä tower in the Kazan citadel, and substituting the Islamic crescent. One of the most significant Muslim conferences took place in May 1917 in Moscow where, on the initiative of the Kazan Tatar scholar Ayaz Isḥaki, the First (post-February) All-Russian Muslim Congress assembled over 800 delegates to discuss national autonomy, land reform, Russia's future form as a unitary or federal state, and reform of the official administration of Islam, whereby the muftiate (an organ of Russia's Ministry of the Interior) would be replaced by an elected Muslim Religious Board. The Congress elected a People's Council (Milli shura) to co-ordinate the political activity of all Muslim peoples of the empire, which in general followed SR policies.[48] The most contentious issue was the status of Muslim women under *shari*^{c}*ah* law, which reflected the Koranic assertion of their inferiority to men.[49] It was customary that daughters were contracted into marriage without being consulted and that an unsubmissive wife should be beaten, and a man could divorce himself simply by repudiating his wife. As champions of equality for women, Isḥaki and his Tatar supporters faced the solid opposition of most delegates from the less reformed communities in Caucasus and Turkestan, and most imams considered that the whole social structure would be threatened by emancipated women voting in elections. It was thus a great achievement for enlightened Tatar opinion, unique in world Islam at the time, that the majority at the Congress became persuaded that women's rights should be equal to men's, that women should not be secluded in the harem, that husbands should commit themselves to monogamy, child-marriage should be prohibited and the right of divorce should be mutual.[50]

A high point of Muslim political activity came in July, when the Second Russian Muslim Congress, the Russian Muslim Military Congress and a congress of mullahs all ran concurrently in Kazan. Despite fierce opposition from the mullahs, the congress delegates persuaded the majority that Muslim women must participate on equal terms with men in the elections and, proclaiming the national-cultural autonomy of the Muslims of ‘inner Russia’ and Siberia, formed a provisional government.[51]

Because of the tense situation in Russia, with an abortive Bolshevik uprising in July and Lavr Kornilov's attempted coup d’état in August, the Second All-Russian Muslim Congress decided to pursue the aims of this declaration immediately, without waiting for the Constituent Assembly elections. Its request to the Russian Provisional Government to facilitate the introduction of self-government of Muslims in the spheres of religion and education, however, became irrelevant three weeks later, when the Bolshevik coup occurred. In any case, the Provisional Government gave no encouragement whatever to requests for autonomy from non-Russian nationalities, large or small. All the important Russian political parties were against the federalization of the empire, but the Muslim minorities experienced greater hostility than most, because of the racist reaction evoked in Russians by the slightest sign of Tatar self-assertion: ‘They're wanting to take us back to the days of Batu Khan.’[52]

The Caucasian peoples, 1900 to the First World War

Since 1878 the Russian Empire had included the Anatolian districts of Ardahan and Kars. At times the frontier was pushed even farther west beyond Trebizond and Erzurum, to annex most of ‘Turkish Armenia’, and it was on this rugged high plateau that the Caucasian campaigns of the First World War were fought. In 1914 the Turks, commanded by Enver Pasha, advanced eastward from Erzurum to Sarykamysh, and drove the Russians out of Ardahan. However, the Russian army recovered all these losses and in 1916 reached Erzinjan, 190 miles west of Kars, where they remained until the February Revolution.[53]

To Europeans the Caucasus front seemed a remote theatre of war which could be largely disregarded, but the number of people involved was not insignificant. Russia's Caucasian Army numbered 270,000 (including about 20,000 Armenian and Georgian volunteers) and in 1915 350,000 Armenian refugees fled from ‘Turkish Armenia’ into Russia to escape from the massacres carried out by the ‘Young Turk’ régime of pashas Enver, Talaat and Jemal. On the Turkish side were up to 180,000 soldiers; of whom about 76,500 were killed or wounded in 1914 at Sarykamysh, and 60,000 in 1916 at Erzurum.[54] The Caucasus war front was central to emerging strategic concerns in the Middle East, where changes were arising from ongoing revolutions in Turkey and Persia, leading to the creation of a new republic in the former and a new dynasty in the latter. Turkey's nationalist revival – based on delusions of Turkish racial superiority and a cult of armed force and expansion into the supposedly fraternal ‘Turanian’ countries of the Caucasus and Turkestan – concerned the Russians directly. On the other hand, Turkey felt threatened by the Western Allies’ high-handed promise that Russia would have Istanbul after the war.[55]

The British had been directly involved in the Middle East since 1903, when they obtained an oil-drilling concession in Persia, which Britain and Russia occupied in 1907, dividing it into their respective zones of influence.[56] In Turkey German diplomats had been very active before 1914, intriguing against Russia and Britain and modernizing the Turkish army, with the aim of establishing German influence in the oil-rich Ottoman province of Iraq and in Persia. Towards this purpose German engineers had been building a 1,500-mile-long railway to link Istanbul with Baghdad. This had reached Konya, and in 1902 they obtained the concession to complete the line via Adana and Mosul.[57] The Ottoman government held back from entering the war until German warships on loan to the Turkish navy shelled Batumi in October 1914, causing Russia, France and Britain to declare war on Turkey.[58]

Within Russia's Caucasus colony, ethnic and status ranking prevailed. Russians dominated the civil and military administration in Tbilisi, as well as providing some of the commercial middle class and most of the skilled workers for railways, shipping and the oil industry. In North Caucasus, in addition to the established Cossack Hosts of the Terek and Kuban, peasants from southern Russia and Ukraine had settled in large numbers,[59] occupying much fertile land formerly utilized by the indigenous peoples. In Kuban territory petroleum (in quantities much smaller than in Azerbaijan) had been tapped since the 1860s in the Circassian lands of the Taman peninsula and the hills south-west of Maykop, and this had brought Russian engineers and workers to the region.[60]

Georgians living in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and other cities formed both an industrial working class and a Europeanized élite who were active not only in local councils but also in the State Duma in Petrograd. They were the most politically conscious of the Caucasian peoples, and the names of N. Zhordania, I. Tṣereteli, N. Chkheidze and others became known far beyond Georgia's borders. The Georgian intelligentsia were unanimously aligned with the Menshevik SDs, both in Tbilisi and St Petersburg, where in February 1917 Tṣereteli became a Provisional Government minister and chkheidze the Chairman of the Soviet. However, Georgia also produced some Bolsheviks – notably including Iosif Jughashvili, later known as Stalin, the son of an Osetian cobbler in Gori, who had studied at the Tbilisi Orthodox Church seminary, then 'served his time as an apprentice revolutionary' in Baku in 1907–9 along with S. Shahumyan.[61] While most Georgians were Orthodox Christians, the 'Georgian Muslims' – the Acḥars and Laz living between Batumi and Trebizond – were so strongly pro-Turkish that in

1914 they actively collaborated with the Turkish invaders there, bringing upon themselves the Russian army's vengeance in 1915.[62]

The Armenians were deeply divided socially, with a mass of poor peasantry scraping a bare living on the high plateau, and a long-established élite of merchants and financiers who wielded great influence in towns throughout the Caucasus, and whose large diaspora included many people of considerable influence in international commerce and finance. But they also had a warrior tradition, built up over centuries of struggle to defend their homeland. Despite this useful military potential, in 1915 the Russian government disbanded its Armenian volunteer regiments, discharged their officers, prohibited political activity and made it clear that Armenians could never hope for autonomy.[63] This denial of military experience to the Armenians put them at a disadvantage when the Russian Empire became engulfed in revolution and civil war.

The Azerbaijanis, who included many rich landowners and merchant financiers in Baku, Ganja and other towns, also provided many officials in legal and educational institutions, but few of these attained senior ranks. By 1914, however, there was a body of educated politicians, including A. Aghayev, M. F. Akhundzadä, A. Huseynzadä and M. A. Räsulzadä, whose cultural connections were chiefly with Persia, although politically some sympathized with the pan-Turkic ideology of the Young Turks. Although, according to the Armenian Bolshevik Shahumyan, earnings in the oil industry were so good that Baku workers showed no interest in politics, a large strike occurred there in 1914. However, police measures, including the exile of activists like Shahumyan, drove the socialist movement in Baku underground. In a different category were the southern Azerbaijani migrant workers and craftsmen from Persia, who worked in many parts of 'Russian' Caucasus, and the semi-nomadic Turkic and Kurdish tribes of the hills. Azerbaijani politics were more nationalistic outside Baku, with stronger pan-Turkic and Islamic sentiments, especially in Ganja, the centre of Azerbaijani tradition.[64]

From the Russian viewpoint, North Caucasus fell into four areas: (1) the Kuban, stretching from the Black Sea eastwards to Batalpashinsk on the upper course of the Kuban river, with such Russian towns as Yekaterinodar, Novorossiysk, Maykop and Armavir, and the wide wheat-growing lands around Stavropol to the north; the remnants of Circassian peoples and the Turkic Karachay inhabited the valleys of the tributaries flowing in from the south. (2) The Terek territory, stretching eastward from here to the Caspian, was varied and turbulent: in the foothills were several Russian spa towns, including Pyatigorsk, Zheleznovodsk and Kislovodsk, situated to the north of the Kabarda and Balkar highlands, where numerous tributaries joined the Terek; farther east lay the territory of the northern Osetians and, on the middle course of the Terek, the strategic town of Vladikavkaz, controlling the Military Highway through the mountains to Georgia. (3) East of Vladikavkaz lay the territory of the Ingush and Chechen peoples, the lowland part of which was dominated by the Russian town of Groznyy on the Sunzha, with its oil wells and the largest population of industrial workers in the Caucasus outside Baku. The whole Terek--Sunzha region was bounded on the north by the old defensive lines of Cossack settlements (*stanitsa*s), including the headquarter towns Mozdok and Kizlar, and beyond them the open steppes inhabited by the nomadic Nogays and Kalmyks. (4) Lastly, south-east of Chechenia, the mountains of Daghestan, with its numerous ethnic communities looking towards the administrative centre Temir-Khan Shura (later Buynaksk), and its Caspian seaports, Port Petrovsk and Darband. Even in Daghestan some tribesmen, especially Lezgis, had been driven to seek employment in towns, including Groznyy and Baku, and in the Caspian fisheries.

Since Russia's Caucasus War the North Caucasian peoples had been isolated from cultural links with other countries, including Turkey, to which many thousands of their *muhajir* compatriots had emigrated or been exiled, forming a strong expatriate community with intense hatred for their Russian oppressors. So recent were their memories of that ruthless war, and so intrusive the policing of their territory thereafter, that those who remained in their homelands in the Great Caucasus and Daghestan were the Caucasian communities which in 1914 harboured the strongest desire for liberation from the Russian Empire. The Ottoman government's contrivance of a *fatwa* declaring the war against Russia a *jihad* no doubt evoked a considerable response among North Caucasus Muslims, while the Osetians, Kabardans, Ingush and Kumuks were less anti-Russian.[65]

Many Caucasian mountain people hated their Russian conquerors so bitterly that from time to time they threw up a national hero, a solitary rebel or *abrek*, dedicated to wreaking vengeance upon them. ^{c}Abdurrahim Avtorkhanov in his memoirs recalls the Chechens Bey-Bulat, whose exploits against General Yermolov were legendary, and Zelimkhan, who kept up the fight in 1905–13. The latter's decision to become an *abrek* arose from an anti-Chechen pogrom staged in Groznyy's marketplace, when Russian troops shot seventeen Chechens. Zelimkhan and his band avenged this by stopping a train in the steppe and shooting seventeen Russian passengers.[66]

None of the Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire were subject to military service. Indeed, service in the Russian army was abhorrent to most Muslims: 'From their very first encounter with Russians the mountaineers had seen mobilization for military service as a symbol of assimilation to the hated "ghiaour", the first step towards Russification…It meant apostasy from Islam, having to eat pork, etc.'[67] In 1914, however, recruitment began of Muslim volunteers to form a 'Caucasian Cavalry Division', consisting of regiments from each of the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus – Circassians, Kabardans, Ingush, Chechens, Daghestanis and Azerbaijanis – as well as Tekke Turkmens from Transcaspia. The Circassian regiment included not only Adygeys, Cherkeses and Abazins, but Abkhazians and the Turkic Karachays, Balkars and Nogays. (The Christian Osetians, like the Armenians and Georgians, already provided their own volunteer units.) The Caucasian Cavalry Division served with distinction on the Austrian front, but was brought back to Russia in 1917. Unlike the main Russian army it did not disintegrate after February 1917 but was transferred by the Provisional Government in August to St Petersburg for police duty, taking on the function normally entrusted to the Cossacks because the latter had become less reliable.[68]

By the early twentieth century many Cossacks were questioning the Russian state system and their own role in it. Although Cossack troops were widely used to break up demonstrations during the 1905 Revolution and its aftermath, there were signs of mutiny even then in their ranks. Growing political awareness led to demands for self-government; in 1906 a democratic assembly of the Kuban Cossacks was held; and in the State Duma, where Cossack delegates were active, a proposal for autonomy was presented in 1910. The fact that Cossacks of the St

Petersburg garrison took no action against demonstrators in February 1917 showed that even their allegiance to the tsar was not unquestioning. In the First World War more than 250,000 Cossacks of the Don, Kuban and Terek were on continuous service for three years. Now, like other social groups, they formed committees and held conferences: on 23 March a Union of Cossacks was formed to co-ordinate the eleven hosts and defend Cossack interests, and in May representatives of the Don Host elected General A. Kaledin as their ataman. Like most other communities they did not set their aims higher than autonomy within a Russian federation, but the very nature of the Cossacks predetermined their becoming principally a powerful anti-Bolshevik force.[69]

This was confirmed in July 1917, when after an abortive Bolshevik coup and the collapse of Russia's Austrian front, Kerenskiy, now prime minister of the Russian Provisional Government, appointed General L. Kornilov (the son of a Siberian Cossack) to be the Russian army's commander-in-chief. Kornilov's desire to restore law and order and ‘save the motherland’ led him to order Cossack cavalry and the Caucasian Cavalry Division to advance on St Petersburg in August, aiming to replace the Provisional Government with a military dictatorship. Kerenskiy thereupon appealed to the Workers’ Council (Soviet) to defend the city, and the attempted coup collapsed, Kornilov being placed under nominal arrest for mutiny. Kornilov's revolt was the first attempt to organize military opposition to the revolutionaries, and the first military episode in the Civil War. In late August the Caucasian Division dispersed to their homelands where, under the various national governments, ‘Life in the Kuban was exemplary and the administration democratic’, until Bolshevik agitators began to infiltrate the region.[70]

The Caucasian peoples and the Russian revolution

On 1 March 1917 great hopes had been raised by news of the February Revolution in Petrograd and the end of tsarist rule, which was announced in Tbilisi by the Armenian mayor, A. Khatisyan. Although there was no Georgian nationalist movement, anti-Russian patriotism manifested itself immediately: the Georgians expelled the Russian bishops who had been imposed on their Orthodox Church and revived the Georgian patriarchate. This reassertion of the autocephality of the Georgian Church was confirmed by a Georgian Church Council in September 1917, but it was characteristic of the Russian Orthodox Church's imperial attitude that in December Patriarch Tikhon rejected the restoration of Georgia's autocephality. As in other parts of the empire, in a movement pioneered by the *zemstvo*s and War Industry Committees during the war, civic committees were quickly formed in cities and towns by spontaneous action of the intelligentsia. In these and various regional Executive Committees the Constitutional Democrat (KD) liberals played a conspicuous part,[71] mainly along with the SRs and Mensheviks, while the Russian Provisional Government appointed an interim government of 'Transcaucasia' ('Ozakom') in Tbilisi. As elsewhere, the introduction of *zemstvo*s promised improvements in local government, but civic bodies adhered to the Russian Provisional Government's policy of continuing the war and postponing significant reforms until convocation of the Constituent Assembly.[72]

In Azerbaijan a Caucasian Muslim Congress was held in Ganja in March 1917, and a Turkic Decentralization Party was founded with a view to the creation of a federal Russia. The same aim was expressed at a congress in Baku in April, although its general purpose was to show support for the Petrograd Provisional Government, on whose behalf it founded two Muslim national bureaux: one for ‘Transcaucasia’, the other for North Caucasus and Daghestan. Federalism with territorial autonomy was also the basis for the new Russia put forward by Räsulzadä and accepted by all delegates, including the Volga Tatars, at the First All-Russian Muslim Congress in Moscow in May. Thereafter the Decentralization party in Baku was absorbed into Räsulzadä's Müsawat (‘Equality’), while the Azerbaijani Himmät (‘Effort’) party split into a Bolshevik and a Menshevik wing. The most fervently Muslim politicians combined in September to form the Muslim Union (Ittiḥad), which stood for *shari*^{c}*ah* law and ‘freedom from European capitalism and imperialism’. Despite the Azerbaijanis’ formation of these political organizations and participation in the All-Russian Muslim Congress in Moscow in May, it was socialist agitation among the large, politicized industrial working class in Baku that dictated the course of the revolution there. Baku, with its considerable Russian population and industrial working class, was the natural location for the socialist ‘Transcaucasian’ Soviet, which was formed in March (with almost entirely Russian and Armenian membership, and no Muslims). Most members were SRs and Menshevik SDs, but it was the Armenian Bolshevik, Stepan Shahumyan (still in punitive exile), who was elected chairman because of his personal qualities. Significantly, at a Russian Army Congress in Tbilisi (Russia's ‘Transcaucasian’ military headquarters) in May the Provisional Government's concern for the continuation of the war until victory was supported only by Armenia, while Georgia and Azerbaijan voted against it. The potential threat to the revolution embodied in Kornilov's abortive coup in Petrograd in July 1917 had its repercussions in Baku, culminating in a general strike in September, when the newly elected committee of the Soviet was dominated by communists. However, in the Soviet elections on 22 October the Bolsheviks’ 16% share of votes was far exceeded by the Müsawat, SR and Dashnaktsutyun parties, with 33.5%, 25.9% and 21.8% respectively. By early October the food shortage in South Caucasus was causing unrest, and at a communist congress in Tbilisi Shahumyan urged the necessity for an armed uprising.[73]

The Civil War which began after Lenin's coup in October became largely the Russian state's war of reconquest of its former colonies – or, from the latters’ viewpoint, the struggle of Russia's subject peoples for liberation and independence. By 1917 discussion of such national aspirations was widespread, especially in relation to the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, under the heading of ‘self-determination’ – a concept which received its widest expression in the ‘Fourteen Points’ for peace treaties proposed in January 1918 by the US president Woodrow Wilson. Introduced in Russia by the SDs Plekhanov and Martov, it had received its clearest statement in 1903 by the SRs: after the impending revolution the peoples of the Russian Empire ‘must be allowed complete and unconditional self-determination’, but those who did not want separation from Russia would have the option of belonging to a free federation.[74] Lenin also adopted the concept, but certainly did not either invent it or believe in it. While for most people it meant a nation's right to constitute an independent state (especially by seceding from an empire) and to determine its own form of government, for Lenin ‘self-determination’ was merely a tactical ploy in the strategy of communist revolution, and did not imply support for the fragmentation of an empire into smaller states. On the contrary, he believed that the easier it became for subject nations to choose secession, the less they would in practice demand it – ‘because the benefits of big states…are indubitable’. Nor did Lenin see self-determination as a step towards a federal state: ‘The aim of socialism is not only to end the fragmentation of humanity into petty states and national isolation…not merely the drawing together of nations, but their fusion into one.’ Tortuously, he theorized that ‘humanity [could] attain the inevitable fusing together of nations only after a transitional period…during which they are free to separate’.[75] Lenin's confident assumption was that after being allowed this trial period of sampling independence, oppressed nations would flock to rejoin the reformed empire. This formulation, written before 1917, shows that Lenin was not at all interested in the independence of nations for its own sake. In Avtorkhanov's words, ‘Lenin rejected self-determination in practice, since it contradicted the totalitarian system which he wanted to create in Russia in the name of Marxism and under the guise of “socialism”.’ He and his political heirs the Russian (later ‘Soviet Union’) Communist Party adhered to this principle of ‘drawing together’ and ‘fusion’ (*sblizheniye i sliyaniye*) consistently for the next 70 years, even while incorporating into each successive constitution of the USSR an empty phrase ‘guaranteeing’ to union republics (but not to lesser grades of autonomy) the ‘freedom of secession’.[76]

Among the subject peoples themselves, however, there was an umambiguous desire for genuine self-government: because of Russia's oppressive rule, practically all the non-Russian peoples of the empire shared the desire to liberate themselves and form their own national states. Demands for autonomy or independence were not widely expressed immediately after the collapse of the tsarist system in February 1917, but in March Ukraine took the lead, and thereafter the aspirations of other peoples grew increasingly vocal.

The Cossacks in the Russian Civil War

After Kornilov's attempted coup Kerenskiy, believing Ataman Kaledin of the Don Cossacks to have been involved, announced his dismissal, but Kaledin ignored this, and in response to the October coup declared martial law on the Don and began to root out Bolsheviks. Similar action was taken in the Kuban and Terek regions, and the three Cossack Hosts, moving away from the idea of autonomy within a Russian federation, towards the formation of an independent Cossack state, agreed to form a ‘South-Eastern Union’, including the Kalmyks and the Union of Caucasian Mountain Peoples.

The fact that in October 1917 the St Petersburg garrison Cossacks had made no attempt to defend the Provisional Government indicated that Cossacks in general reserved their judgement and in the impending civil war might turn either to the Bolsheviks or to the anti-communist ‘White’ camp: accordingly, leaders of both sides strove to win them over. Lenin appointed a commissar for Cossack affairs and assured them (insincerely) that the Cossack way of life would be preserved. Meanwhile anti--Bolshevik statesmen, soldiers and refugees flocked south to the Don and Caucasus. In November an emergency government was formed on the Don, whose main task was to create a Volunteer Army (consisting chiefly of officers and cadets) for defence against ‘the German–Bolshevik yoke’ and ‘the restoration of a Free, Great Russia’ on a democratic basis. Kaledin meanwhile attempted to form a Cossack army from deserters returning from the Galician front by way of Ukraine, for use against local centres of Bolshevik activity, especially Rostov-on-Don. Lenin, perceiving that his régime could not survive unless the Don was in Bolshevik hands, sent an army, including ‘Red Guards’ – workers from Moscow, St Petersburg and other cities – while Black Sea Fleet sailors brought ships to defend Rostov. Nevertheless the city fell to Kaledin's Cossacks early in December, and Bolshevik resistance in the Donbass coalfield crumbled.[77]

Many Bolsheviks in the south-east then went into hiding, while Lenin sent agitators to the Don to persuade the Cossacks that their true interests lay with the ostensible aims of the Bolsheviks: ‘peace, bread and land’. This indeed made a powerful appeal, especially to the poorer Cossacks of the north, so that a political schism developed, and Kaledin found it increasingly difficult to keep his army together. Pro-Bolshevik Cossacks organized soviets in the Don Cossack *stanitsa*s, and by February 1918 Rostov, Novocherkassk and the whole Don Cossack Region were in Bolshevik hands, and a ‘Don Soviet Republic’, federated with the Russian Republic, was proclaimed in March.[78]

There was similar turbulence on the Kuban, where the Cossack Host government (known by the Ukrainian name Rada, ‘Council’) deployed against the Bolsheviks not only loyal Cossacks, but also officer cadet units and Caucasian native cavalry regiments. Industrial workers lived mainly in the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk while, at the Cossack headquarters in Yekaterinodar, Cossacks were outnumbered by peasant ‘outsiders’ to whom Lenin's Decree on Land made an immediate appeal. As many Cossacks also went over to the Bolsheviks, and in November a ‘Black Sea Soviet Republic’ was proclaimed in Novorossiysk, January 1918 found the Cossack and White Russian army besieged in Yekaterinodar. When the city fell to the Bolsheviks in March the Whites withdrew south into the Caucasus foothills.[79]

Meanwhile, on the Terek in December 1917 a separatist movement under the Cossack ataman M. A. Karaulov and the Kumuk prince Rashidkhan Kaplanov dispersed the soviets in Vladikavkaz and Groznyy. This was even less Russianized territory than the Kuban, and its indigenous Ingush, Chechens, Osetians and Daghestanis were demanding self-government. Conflicts arose between them and the Cossacks who, as Russians and colonizers, had no intention of relinquishing land which they looked upon as theirs. After much turbulence a Bolshevik 'congress of peoples of the Terek' was held at Pyatigorsk, where the communist Sergey Kirov proclaimed the adherence of the 'Terek People's Socialist Republic' to the RSFSR.[80]

Thus, in March 1918 the Bolsheviks held all three Cossack regions of the Don--Caucasus area; the army and Cossack officers had fled, and many rank-and-file Cossacks were at least resigned to Soviet power. When Kaledin's authority over the Don collapsed in January 1918 the nucleus of the White Volunteer Army, under General Kornilov, withdrew southward and, after severe hardships, reached the Kuban, where they were joined by some Don and Kuban Cossacks and Circassian troops. In an abortive siege of Bolshevik-held Yekaterinodar Kornilov was killed in April, and his place taken by Anton Denikin, under whose command the Volunteer Army retreated northward again to the relative safety of the Don region.[81] By then the tide had turned against the Bolsheviks in south Russia, principally as a result of the German occupation of Ukraine.

After the Bolsheviks were driven out of Novocherkassk a Cossack 'Assembly for Salvation of the Don' elected a new ataman, General P. Krasnov, whose 'Don Republic' was quickly recognized both by the Germans and the Allies.

Although Krasnov came to power on a genuine wave of anti-Bolshevik feeling, he was dependent on the Germans for military and financial aid while, as ataman of the Don, he made an alliance with his neighbour, Hetman Skoropadskyy of Ukraine, and was on good terms with the Germans who occupied Ukraine.[82] In spring 1918 Denikin's Volunteer Army was encamped on the southern border of the Don region. As most Cossacks on the Kuban were antagonized by the Bolsheviks' dictatorial attitude, they went over to the Volunteer Army and now made up most of its strength.[83] The Don Cossacks and Volunteer Army regained control of the Don--Kuban area, but political relations between them were complicated, as the Whites suspected that the Cossacks might change sides, and Russian officers were uneasy because, while they were still at war with Germany, Krasnov was on good terms with the Germans, and the Whites' departure on a joint operation with the Cossacks might allow the Germans to occupy the Kuban.[84] To White Russian officers any relations whatever with Skoropadskyy and Ukraine were unthinkable, because they not only denied the existence of a Ukrainian nation but, being blindly committed to the sacred concept of 'Russia one and indivisible' (i.e. the empire), they considered the Ukrainians' declaration of independence as treason.[85] Thus Russian chauvinism prevented Denikin from forming a potentially useful alliance with the Ukrainians against the Bolsheviks.

However, the Ukrainians themselves nurtured grandiose territorial ambitions which would better have been forgotten at this time when the survival of the independent Ukrainian state was under threat. Maps published by Ukrainian nationalists showed not only the Kuban but also much of the Don region as 'Ukrainian ethnographic territory', and some of the (originally Ukrainian) Kuban Cossacks themselves wanted to belong to Ukraine.[86]

As Lenin's agreement to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and German occupation of Ukraine had halted fighting between Soviet Russia and Ukraine, Civil War operations in the south during most of 1918 were restricted to the Don, Astrakhan and North Caucasus. In the summer Krasnov's Cossacks drove the Red Army out of most southern districts of the Don region. On the Kuban, where the Whites were re-forming, there was no defined front between them and the scattered Bolshevik forces holding Yekaterinodar, Stavropol and other towns on the railway, surrounded by a sea of Cossacks who owed neither side allegiance. To add to the confusion, the Black Sea Soviet Republic was inundated by refugees from Skoropadskyy's Ukraine. By June, however, the Kuban Cossacks were ready to support Denikin's advance against the Bolsheviks. In August Yekaterinodar and Novorossiysk were taken, and the Reds retreated eastwards to the Terek, where another ‘Soviet Republic’ had been overturned in June and a Cossack and peasant council founded. Within the local Red Army a mutiny, led by a Cossack officer, broke out, and later Sorokin, a Red Army commander with Russian chauvinist views, staged a coup against the Bolshevik committee in Pyatigorsk, during which he had its ‘Jewish commissars’ shot, while the Cheka massacred the ‘bourgeoisie’. Such disorders facilitated the advance of the Whites, who captured Stavropol in November and Pyatigorsk in January 1919, annihilating the typhus-stricken local Bolshevik army in the process. During these campaigns the Kuban Cossack leader A. Shkuro gained fame for his band's daring raids against the Bolsheviks, and notoriety for the particular cruelty and indiscipline of his men.[87]

In May 1919 the tide turned briefly in favour of the Whites. By then Krasnov had been replaced by General Denikin, in an attempt to overcome the endemic dissension between the Russian-speaking Cossacks of the Line and the Ukrainian-speaking Kuban Cossacks. As the latter were more numerous and strongly desired independence from Russia, their Rada in Yekaterinodar often disagreed with the Volunteer Army. The president of the Kuban Rada was murdered in June, and later that year General P. N. Vrangel, the White commander in the Caucasus, staged a coup: the Rada was dispersed, several of its deputies arrested and one of the most anti-Russian Cossack leaders hanged. The Volunteer Army thereby forfeited much of its support on the Kuban.[88]

Meanwhile Denikin's army launched a northward advance on Moscow, which reached Oryol in mid-October. Within two months, however, the Bolsheviks had driven the White Army south again, Yekaterinoslav was taken by the Reds, and January 1920 saw the remnants of Denikin's army driven south of the lower Don, where they made a stand along with Vrangel's Caucasian army. By February 1920 only the Kuban and Crimea remained under White control; in March they were pushed south from the Don, and within two weeks all of North Caucasus had fallen to the Bolsheviks. The Whites' only remaining base was now Crimea, to which they were evacuated by sea from Novorossiysk. As the demoralized Volunteer Army and Don Cossacks were joined by masses of refugees, including Kalmyks from the Astrakhan steppe, there was much disorder, and some 20,000 people were left behind.[89] At this low point, however, when the remnants of White forces were penned up in the Crimean peninsula, Vrangel took over command from Denikin and reorganized the Volunteer Army for a last attempt to overthrow the Bolsheviks.

Crimea in the Russian revolution and Civil War

In 1900, despite the emigration of thousands of native Crimean Tatars to Turkey, they were still the largest community in Crimea, amounting to over 250,000 (46%) in a total population of 539,000. Most towns had considerable numbers of Tatars, and in the old capital Baghchesaray and Karasubazar, the population was almost entirely Tatar.[90] The Crimeans had experienced a considerable national revival since the 1880s under the leadership of Ismaᶜil Bey Gaspraly – ‘the greatest Muslim reformer of the nineteenth century’ and ‘the man who awoke the Turkic world’.[91] Thanks to Gaspraly the Crimean Tatars had a well-established national intelligentsia when revolution came in February 1917, and like every other nationality they voiced their desire for autonomy. However, no Russian government would be likely to grant them this, since Crimea, having Sevastopol as the principal Russian naval base on the Black Sea, was of great strategic importance to the empire while, on the other hand, a ‘Tatar’ state enjoying any degree of independence would be subject to the influence of Turkey, Russia's rival in the region.

In the first flush of democratic euphoria after the February Revolution a Crimean Tatar National Party (Milli fırka) was founded in July 1917, and a Tatar government formed in Simferopol in November under Chelibijan Chelibi and Jafar Sayyid-Ahmad. This government stood for civil rights, sexual equality and the abolition of private estates and lands belonging to Islamic organizations, and it created Tatar military units.[92] Although there was a small Bolshevik group in Sevastopol among Russian workers and sailors of the Black Sea Fleet, it could not gain control of the local soviet, which consisted mainly of SRs and Mensheviks, until sailors of the

Baltic Fleet sent by Lenin staged a coup in December. In January 1918 the Bolsheviks violently overthrew the Crimean National Assembly (Kurultay) and occupied Simferopol. A period of near-anarchy ensued, during which Russian sailors perpetrated looting and atrocities against the local population.[93]

Crimea had not been mentioned specifically in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, but as it was not considered part of Ukraine, with which the Germans had made a separate deal, the Bolsheviks claimed that it belonged to Soviet Russia. In an attempt to avert the seizure of the Black Sea fleet by the Germans, a Soviet Republic of Tavrida was proclaimed on 21 March 1918, and the Bolsheviks started organizing troops. The Crimeans were also preparing to fight for their independence, and an appeal for assistance which they sent to Istanbul was received sympathetically. In April the Bolsheviks' use of the Black Sea Fleet against German ships approaching Kherson gave the Germans a pretext for occupying Crimea. The Tatars responded by staging an anti-Bolshevik revolt and reinstating Sayyid-Ahmad's government. However, Germany's ambitions in the Middle East made the prospect of a Turkish protectorate in Crimea undesirable, and they rejected both the Tatar government and the possibility of a White Russian KD government in favour of a puppet régime headed by the Polish--Lithuanian Tatar general M. Sulkiewicz. His coalition government included Tatars, Ukrainians and 'Russian German' colonists, but excluded the Russian KDs.[94]

Crimea changed hands three times between November 1918 and mid 1919. On the departure of the Germans in November 1918 a Zemstvo Conference in Simferopol set up a government led by the Russian liberals M. Vinaver and V.

Nabokov and the Tatar Solomon Krym. Local government bodies were reinstated, Simferopol university was reopened, restrictions on civil rights were lifted, and the Tatar Kurultay was able to function. However, Crimea's KD government was fundamentally opposed to ‘regional separatism’. Like all local initiatives, this reasonable Russian liberal administration evoked only antagonism on the part of General Denikin. Nor did Simferopol's appeals to the Allies receive much response, apart from a small French expeditionary force sent to Sevastopol in December 1918. Forced by Denikin to pursue a ‘Great Russian’ policy, Crimea's ‘well-meaning but helpless government of Zemstvo Liberals’[95] received little Tatar support because of atrocities carried out by the Volunteer Army. Nevertheless the Kadet government in Crimea had been an experiment unique in Russian history: ‘an attempt…to build political authority on the basis of popular support and create a…political administration capable of realizing basic liberal principles’.[96]

Denikin's representatives in Crimea were suspicious of the native population, and in February 1919 raided leading Tatars’ homes and closed publications critical of the White régime. Therefore, Sulkiewicz and the other Lithuanian Tatars who had congregated in Crimea moved to Baku, where they joined Polish and Turkish officers helping the Azerbaijanis to organize their army. The Denikin régime in Crimea came to a sudden end in April 1919 when the French forces – the only body maintaining law and order – were evacuated from Sevastopol, allowing the Red Army to occupy the peninsula. Within a month, however, Denikin drove the Bolsheviks out again and resumed his repression of Crimea's native population. Tatar patriotic organizations went underground and, seeing their only hope in co-operation with the Bolsheviks, joined them in transferring the Crimean anti-White movement to Odessa in autumn 1919.[97]

While Soviet Russia and Poland were at war in 1919–20, Vrangel was directing the last campaigns of the White Russian army from its cramped base in Crimea. In June 1920 his troops broke through the Perekop isthmus into southern Ukraine and occupied Tavrida province, and he also sent troops under the Circassian General S. G. Ulagay by sea to the Kuban, where anti-Bolshevik guerrillas were operating from Circassian territory, but this expedition evoked so little support from the Kuban Cossacks that it quickly returned to Crimea. A truce between Poland and Soviet Russia in October left the Red Army free to concentrate on the southern front again, with the result that the remnants of the Volunteer Army were driven out of southern Ukraine, and in November 1920 made a final stand in Crimea to cover the evacuation of the last civilian refugees and soldiers of anti-communist Russia – over 145,000 people – to Constantinople and beyond.[98]

North Caucasus, 1917–1918

A terrible sequel to the Civil War and the Bolsheviks' oppression of the peasantry came in 1920–1, when prolonged drought led to widespread famine. In 1920 the south Russian provinces from Kaluga to the Don suffered bad harvests, and in 1921 the famine spread much wider, embracing a huge area of the most important grain-producing provinces around the middle and lower Volga, Ukraine and the North Caucasus plain. Huge numbers of the rural population suffered from starvation, the number of deaths probably reaching 5 million, and 'the principal cause of the famine, or at least its huge extent and fearful consequences, was the harsh economic and food-supply policy of the Bolsheviks'.[99]

In North Caucasus it was the Muslim peoples who first gave nationalist aims political form by attempting to organize an autonomous state. As a local politician testifies, there were no Bolsheviks among the North Caucasians in 1917, and the left wing of the national movement which emerged in February consisted of a few native SRs and Mensheviks. Such soviets as were formed by the Russian population were also predominantly SR--Menshevik. In March 1917 a provisional Central Committee representing the indigenous peoples of North Caucasus began preparations for a First Congress, which was held in Vladikavkaz in May. Understandably, many of the aims of the North Caucasian peoples had anti-Russian implications: they 'strove first and foremost to regain their recently lost lands and freedom, which morally and historically belonged to them' – but which now were occupied by Russian and Ukrainian Cossacks and peasants. The mountain peoples asserted their ethos of self-defence and honour by demanding that their right to carry weapons – particularly the long dagger, without which a man was improperly dressed – be restored, and that forcible disarming be discontinued. So far as their place in the Russian Empire was concerned, however, at the Muslim Congress of the Caucasus in Baku (15–20 April 1917) attitudes were moderate: neither the North Caucasus peoples nor Azerbaijan demanded independence from Russia, but agreed as their aim a democratic Russian state with territorial autonomy and a federal structure.[100]

As the First Congress had gained wide support, it led to separate conferences, held in August by the Kabardans and Balkars, the Cherkes and Karachays, the Kuban Adygeys (along with Mountain Jews and Circassified Armenians), the Chechens and Ingush, and the Daghestanis. After this preparatory work, the Second Congress of the United

Peoples of North Caucasus and Daghestan was convened on 18 September in Andi, with the Chechen ^{c}Abdul Mejid Chermoyev as chairman of the Central Committee, the Circassian P. Kotsev as vice-chairman, Vasan-Girey Jabagi (Ingush) as prime minister and Heydar Bammat (Kumyk) as foreign minister. Because of disruption by a gathering of 20,000 fanatical Muslims led by Najmuddin Hotsinskiy and Uzun Hajji, the Congress had to be relocated to Vedeno in Chechenia, where a provisional constitution was approved. In March 1918 the North Caucasus government moved its base to Temir-Khan Shura, where the independence of the Union of Mountain Peoples (UMP) was proclaimed on 11 May.[101]

Meanwhile inter-ethnic tension had been increased by the Petrograd Soviet's proclamation of 'Order no. 1' (1 March 1917) abolishing the chain of command in the Russian army. As everywhere else in the empire, its resulting disintegration on the Caucasus front led to the inundation of the whole region by hordes of armed Russian deserters making their way home by whatever means they could, causing much alarm and violence as they demanded food and drink from the population, although the indigenous peoples were themselves hungry. Clashes occurred between Russian soldiers and native people in Abkhazia and Circassia too; at Georgiyevsk riotous deserters attacked Kabardans and burned the town to the ground, while in Mineralnye Vody Kabardans and Nogays joined with railway workers to prevent marauders from sacking the station. Similar events occurred in Chechenia, where Cossack deserters launched a pogrom against Chechens in Groznyy. When the Chechens gathered to wreak vengeance, a massacre was only averted by delegates from the UMP Congress in Vladikavkaz, who dissuaded the Chechens from putting Groznyy to the torch; in Khasav-yurt, however, Russian brutality was indeed avenged by the burning of the town. Perhaps the nadir of looting and terror occurred in Mozdok in June 1917, when neither the Vladikavkaz Soviet nor the North Caucasus Provisional Committee could control the thousands of deserters.[102]

In response to this anarchy, civic committees were formed by Russians and indigenous inhabitants. On the Kuban a Kabardan People's Congress took place in April, and Circassians and Karachays were drawn into civic committees at Batalpashinsk (now Cherkessk). In Yekaterinodar an Executive Committee was created, with its chairman and the Russian Provisional Government commissar both KDs, while the affairs of the Kuban Cossack community were governed by its ataman and Legislative Rada. To the east in Terek Cossack territory an executive committee representing the Provisional Government was formed (headed by the ataman, M. Karaulov), while in Daghestan a civic committee under the garrison commander, a KD, was created in Darband, and a provincial committee was established in the capital, Temir-Khan Shura, by indigenous leaders including the Kumuk prince Nuhbek Tarkovskiy, the Avar landowner and mullah Najmuddin of Hotso (‘Gotsinskiy’ in Russian) and the Kumyk lawyer Heydar Bammat, under the chairmanship of Zubair Temirkhanov of the KD party. Later this body admitted the socialists Ullubiy Buynakskiy and Makhach Dakhadayev, and the overtly Bolshevik Jalaladin Korkmasov and ^{c}Aliakbar Takho-Godi. Soviets too were formed in the principal towns of Daghestan and among army garrisons even in mountain villages such as Gunib, Khunzakh, Botlikh and Akhty. Here Bolshevik influence was negligible, most soviet members being Mensheviks or SRs.[103]

During 1917 the national movements of the North Caucasian peoples burgeoned in a succession of congresses.

In April, at the Caucasian Muslim Congress in Baku the demands voiced by Daghestani delegates were more radically nationalist than those of the Azerbaijanis. In early May the First Congress of the Union of Mountain Peoples in Vladikavkaz combined the aims of a federal republic of Russia and an autonomous republic of North Caucasus. In addition to its secular leaders – the Kumuk prince Rashidkhan Kaplanov, the Chechen millionaire Chermoyev, and the Kabardan horse-breeder Pshemakho Kotsev – it appointed Sheykh Najmuddin of Hotso as its mufti. At the same time at an All-Russian Congress of Muslims in Moscow a Daghestani called for the union of all Muslim peoples of Russia under the banner of Islam. Religious fervour was strongest in Daghestan, where in August an Islamic conference not only resolved that the UMP's laws should be based on the *shari^{c}ah*, but formed an organization, the 'People's Committee' with its own armed Shari^{c}ah Militia, and called for unity among Muslims until Russia's Constituent Assembly. Turbulence ensued: the UMP Central Committee had scheduled a congress to begin on 18 September in the Daghestan village of Andi, but its opening was forestalled by 20,000 Shariatists acclaiming Najmuddin as imam of North Caucasus and demanding an independent Islamic republic. As this was certainly not the intention of the secular leaders, the venue was hastily moved to Vedeno in Chechenia, where they debated the future structure of the North Caucasus Union, the election of deputies, the question of a national army, and contingency plans for a declaration of independence. Two weeks later in Vladikavkaz the Second Congress of Mountain Peoples declared the UMP the legitimate autonomous government. By then Russian garrisons were vacating their forts in Daghestan, and Imam Najmuddin's deputy, the octogenarian Uzun Hajji, hastily replaced Russian officials with Muslims, ignoring the authority of the Provisional Government's Executive

Committee, and evoking opposition from some Daghestani communities.[104]

One cause of unrest in North Caucasus, as elsewhere, was the Russian government's requisitioning of food supplies for the army, which had been initiated in 1915 by the Russian War Industries Committees. Such large quantities were regularly extracted that by September 1917 food shortages were causing unrest, e.g. in Karachay and Circassian territory. This, and the ever-increasing mobs of deserters, led the UMP to request the Petrograd government to release the Caucasian Cavalry Division from service in Russia and return it to the Caucasus to maintain order there. Although the division was very useful to the High Command because of its discipline and efficiency, it was eventually relinquished in October, and its separate regiments became the backbone of the armies of the Mountain Union, Daghestan and Azerbaijan. The UMP's reason for summoning the Caucasian Cavalry Division was that the North Caucasian peoples lacked any means of self-defence, whereas their neighbours, the Russian and Ukrainian Cossacks, were fully armed. In Kuban territory in July, because of general turmoil, including the seizure of land by peasants, the Provisional Government's commissar handed over administration to the Cossack government, which established links with the leaders of the Adygeys, Circassians, Abazins, Karachays and Nogays. However, relations between the Kuban government and local Russian settlers – especially the peasant ‘outsiders’ – became strained, since the latter tended to support the Bolsheviks. As the Kerenskiy government's authority dwindled, while support for the Bolsheviks grew, speeches made at the Rada of the largely Ukrainian Kuban Cossack Host on 7 October emphasized Russia's need for ‘spiritual regeneration’ and the organization of provincial self-government.[105]

Meanwhile the Bolsheviks were extending their influence in North Caucasus among communities receptive to it – which mainly excluded the native Muslim peoples. From April 1917 SD organizations on the Kuban were exclusively Bolshevik and co-operated with neither Mensheviks nor SRs. Communists usurped the leadership of the Kuban Soviet and some civic committees, and incited peasants to seize landlords' estates. In Daghestan, on the other hand, elections to the executive committee in August still produced a majority for the SRs led by the Balkar Shakhanov.

Shortly before the coup d'état by Lenin's Bolsheviks on 25 October 1917, Cossack and indigenous leaders founded the South-Eastern Union of Cossack Hosts, Caucasian Mountain Peoples and Free Peoples of the Steppes, which aimed to 'create the best state system, protect the external security of the Russian State as well as…of the members of the Union, maintain internal order, increase general prosperity, and thereby consolidate the blessings of Freedom won by the [February] revolution'. A particularly important feature of the list of peoples belonging to the UMP, in the light of later events, was the inclusion of the Abkhazians, implying (justly) that they were a North Caucasian (not 'Transcaucasian') people, and that any claim laid to their territory by Russia, or Georgia, would not go unchallenged. The Cossack communities specified in the Union treaty were the Don, Kuban, Terek and Astrakhan Hosts (the latter including the Kalmyks). The indigenous peoples mentioned were those of Daghestan – Avars, Dargos, Laks (Kazi-Kumukhs), Kumuks, Tabasarans, 'Kyurins' (inhabitants of the former Kürin khanate, largely Lezgis) – and of Zakataly region, also Lezgis; mountain peoples of Terek territory – Kabardans, Balkars, Osetians, Ingush, Chechens, Kumuks; peoples of Kuban territory – Karachays, Abazins, Cherkes, Nogays, etc.; the mountain people of Sukhum territory – Abkhazians; steppe peoples of Terek and Stavropol territories – Nogays, Karanogays and Turkmens. A month later the South-Eastern Union government declared that, since a democratic republic was the best form of state, the Union guaranteed its members complete self-government in internal affairs as independent states of the future Russian Democratic Federal Republic. Unfortunately this reasonable view was not acceptable either to the officers of the Volunteer Army or to the Bolsheviks.[106]

The South-Eastern Union consisted of such disparate elements that it did not survive long in the chaos following the October coup. On the one hand, a premature declaration of 'Soviet power' was immediately made by Sergey Kirov in Vladikavkaz; on the other, Kaledin's Don Cossack Host declared its support for the Russian Provisional Government. In Yekaterinodar the Kuban Rada introduced martial law and arrested the local Soviet committee, while on the Terek Ataman Karaulov created a new Cossack government 'to prevent anarchy'. By 2 November 1917 – as Petrograd and Moscow were taken over by the Bolsheviks, and in the Ural Mountains Ataman Dutov declared martial law in Orenburg to save it from the same fate – the White generals had begun to form their Volunteer Army, and civil war became imminent.[107]

Another union emerged in Vladikavkaz in December, when Prince Kaplanov of the Union of Mountain Peoples and Ataman Karaulov of the Terek Cossacks proclaimed a combined Terek--Daghestan government. Its aims included the creation of a regional parliament, a relentless fight against anarchy and counter-revolution (i.e. Bolshevism: it quickly disbanded the soviets of the region, including the Bolshevik headquarters in Vladikavkaz), measures to overcome economic and financial collapse, and the organization of food supplies. Far from being, as communist historians asserted, ‘counter-revolutionary’ and ‘reactionary’, the Terek--Daghestan government stated that the future government of Russia should include representatives of ‘all socialist parties from populists to Bolsheviks’. Meanwhile, as the Terek--Daghestan government's control of the North Caucasus railway (traffic on which was disrupted by fighting between Russians and Chechens at Groznyy and Gudermes) threatened to cut off grain supplies to Baku, an expedition was sent from there to try, unsuccessfully, to reinforce the soviet in Groznyy. In November 1917 at the Second Daghestan Congress the ‘socialist group’ of M. Dakhadayev and D. Korkmasov had tried to prevent the formation of the South-Eastern Union by emphasizing the antagonism between the mountain peoples and the ‘tsarist’ Cossacks. The stresses inherent in the Terek--Daghestan alliance did indeed produce many conflicts between the indigenous peoples and Cossacks, culminating in the murder of Karaulov by the latter because of his attempted compromise. Antagonism between Ingush and Chechens also readily broke out, as did fighting between Ingush and Osetians.[108]

Early in 1918 the Bolsheviks re-established themselves in north-eastern Caucasus. In January a Congress of Peoples of the Terek was held at Mozdok and, despite its mainly Cossack complexion, was dominated by Sergey Kirov, whose policies were Bolshevik. This congress included no representatives of the indigenous peoples except a few unelected Osetians and Kabardans. Thereafter Kirov and Orjonikidze, the Bolshevik satraps in North Caucasus, strove to bring both the native peoples and the Cossacks under their control by organizing further congresses, the second of which, held in Pyatigorsk and Vladikavkaz in February--March, recognized Lenin's government, and elected a ‘Terek

Peoples' Soviet' chaired by the Georgian Noe Buachidze. The old antipathy between Cossacks and native Ingush and Chechens was aggravated in March 1918 by Bolshevik plans for the nationalization of land. As the Ingush anticipated repossessing some of their original territory, while the Cossacks swore never to relinquish any to that 'tribe of robbers', passions rose, there was a wave of looting and murder, but total anarchy was averted by a proposal to reorganize the Terek region as a Soviet republic with national sections for the Ingush, Chechens, Cossacks and others. Meanwhile the Cossacks, as Russians, applied terms of abuse to the mountain peoples, e.g. *baygushi* 'robbers', *ingushnya*,[109] a contemptuous collective for 'Ingush', which parallels that for Chechens and their territory – *chechnya*.) On 17 March 1918 the formation of this 'Terek People's Soviet Republic' was declared, which is said to have balanced the conflicting demands of the region's ethnic and social groups, and introduced various reforms.[110] 'Soviet power' was claimed over the whole Terek region from late March 1918 onwards and, despite incursions by anti-Russian Cossacks led by the Osetian Giorgi Bicherakhov, Vladikavkaz remained in communist hands until February 1919. During this tumultuous period the first British military mission in the Caucasus operated intermittently between June and November 1918.[111]

A land reform based on the RSFSR law of January was implemented in May 1918 by the third Terek Peoples' Congress. This was a highly contentious matter, inevitably requiring reduction of Cossack holdings to provide land for dispossessed native peoples and Russian peasant 'incomers'. A hasty decision to free land on the main Terek tributary, the Sunzha, for Ingush and Russians by moving Cossack villages elsewhere, immediately provoked a conflict which lasted until November, and reduced Cossack enthusiasm for

Bolshevik rule. Similarly, Bolshevik land seizure in Kabarda provoked a revolt in July.[112]

In Daghestan Bolshevik activity was based mainly in the seaports. A revolution committee was formed in Port Petrovsk in November 1917, and here and in Darband all opponents of Bolshevism were ousted from the soviets. Just as Novorossiysk provided the main reservoir of communists in north-west Caucasus, and gave access from Russia by way of the Black Sea, so in the east it was through Petrovsk and Darband that contact was maintained with Bolshevik centres in Astrakhan and, especially, Baku, where Shahumyan's soviet was the main Bolshevik stronghold in the Caspian region. For potential invaders, control over Daghestan required occupation of the ports and coastal plain with its towns from Petrovsk to Beliji, and the Groznyy--Baku railway that linked them. Beyond the accessible foothills little of the mountainous interior could be held without strong garrisons. Thus ‘Soviet power’ in Daghestan was never secure: between January and October 1918 Petrovsk changed hands four times and Darband ten times, while Temir-Khan Shura remained under Constituent Assembly and Daghestani national control until May, when it was occupied by the Reds for six months.

In 1918 religious politics became turbulent in Daghestan. Muslim ears were not entirely closed to the Bolsheviks’ message, especially after their November 1917 proclamation ‘To the Working Muslims of Russia’, which convinced some that communism did not contradict *shari*^{c}*ah* law (or even that the Bolshevik programme was identical with the *shari*^{c}*ah*!). However, the mood of Daghestani Muslim nationalists in January 1918 was demonstrated by the two leaders, Najmuddin and Uzun Hajji, who exhorted the faithful to disperse the Executive Committees and establish rule by the imams. They themselves led an irruption into a socialist congress in Temir-Khan Shura, where the local chairman Z. Temirkhanov castigated the Port Petrovsk revolutionary committee as ‘an organ of Russian power’ which should keep out of Daghestan's internal affairs.[113] Another confrontation between secular revolutionaries and Islamic traditionalists occurred on 23 January 1918, when the Regional Executive Committee's Third Daghestan Congress was to take place in Temir-Khan Shura. Armed socialist guards awaiting the arrival of delegates watched as Najmuddin and Uzun Hajji approached the town at the head of their ‘*shari^{c}ah* army’:

> The Imam's ‘army’ entered Temir-Khan Shura chanting hymns…an endless column…in tattered clothing, on foot and on horseback, some bearing rifles, others flintlocks or simply staves, some glaring fanatically, others with dazed, indifferent eyes, with white cloths around their heads…Everywhere…there were wild-looking, motley groups of turbanned heads.[114]

This scene changed with the appearance of a rival procession of native socialists carrying red flags, singing revolutionary songs to the accompaniment of a military band, and proclaiming as leader their own mufti, ^{c}Ali-Hajji of Akusha (Russified as ‘Akushinskiy’). The episode, presented by Takho-Godi in a ludicrous light, suggests the gulf of understanding which existed, and the possibility of serious conflict, between three sides: the Russified ‘bourgeois’ members of the Executive Committee, the fanatical Islamic traditionalists and the new Daghestani zealots of Leninism. The Executive Committee's success in persuading Najmuddin to drop the title ‘imam’ (associated with Shamil and other famous Islamic leaders) angered Uzun Hajji who, it was said, had threatened decapitation for any Daghestani who did not submit to Imam Najmuddin. Inevitably the incident described did lead to violence, leaving several dead and wounded.[115]

Shortly after this the Bolshevik bridgehead in Petrovsk was briefly cleared by the Executive Committee, but was retaken by a communist assault force from Astrakhan and Baku in April, and their capture of Temir-Khan Shura on 1 May allowed them to proclaim 'Soviet power throughout Daghestan' – rather prematurely, considering the terrain and the Islamic fervour of its population. At this time a suggestion of 'national communism' was heard in Daghestan as elsewhere, when Dakhadayev, still believing that Moscow would grant national territories genuine autonomy in internal affairs, urged communists not to impose their doctrines mechanically, because 'Not everything that is good for Central Russia can be applied to the local way of life.'[116]

After the Bolsheviks' reoccupation of the Terek region the Terek--Daghestan government and the Central Committee of the Union of Mountain Peoples had fled to Temir-Khan Shura. Now the former moved to Georgia, to set up a temporary 'mountain government' there, while the UMP, along with the religious nationalists, retired to the mountains. In Gunib (the site of Shamil's last stand against the 360,000-strong Russian army in 1859) on 11 May 1918 they became the first community in the Caucasus to proclaim full independence from Russia as the Republic of the Union of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, or 'Mountain Republic', led by A. Chermoyev and H. Bammat. However, this government already had an internal rival in Najmuddin's embryonic Islamic state, which on 20 May held a People's Congress, and proclaimed the renaissance of Shamil's imamate under Najmuddin, and the mobilization of all men for the ‘Sharīᶜah Army’, which stormed through Daghestan raiding settlements occupied by Bolsheviks. When Lenin's government was informed of the Mountain Republic's independence it reacted with protests and threats, and was no less obdurate than the White Russians or the nineteenth-century tsarist generals in asserting the ‘oneness and indivisibility’ of their empire.[117]

Fighting had also broken out in north-west Caucasus, where in January 1918 Yekaterinodar had been threatened by Bolsheviks advancing from the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. They occupied several towns, including Armavir, where in February a soviet claimed sole authority in the Kuban region and ‘outlawed’ the Cossack Host and its Rada. Thus began a serious ethnic conflict, arising from the Bolshevik zeal of demobilized Cossacks, who declared ‘Soviet power’ in Maykop industrial district. This ‘triumphal march of Soviet power’ was accompanied by atrocities against Circassian peasants, who had neither served in the tsarist army nor played any part in Russian politics, but adhered to the traditional way of life, disregarding political propaganda. Interpreting this as support for the Whites, the Bolshevik soviet, a combination of army deserters and peasant ‘outsiders’, carried away by ‘a peculiar combination of colonial-settler mentality and crude Bolshevik ideas of achieving social justice by reallocation of material wealth’, stirred up panic and the prejudice of the Russian majority. They formed a 10,000-strong ‘Red Guard’ based on the Russian village of Filippovskoye, in order to ‘protect the new Soviet régime’ from the threat posed by the White Volunteers and Cossacks. In February 1918, when the Circassians of Habukay refused to surrender their weapons and admit Red Guards to their village, it was shelled by artillery until it surrendered. Habukay, Kunchukokhabl and a dozen other Circassian villages were then ravaged by the Russians, who drove the Adygeys out, commandeering their crops and dwellings, and killing some 2,000 people. Farther east in Armavir the Red Guards also massacred more than 1,340 people, including 400 Armenian refugees from Persia and Turkey. The motivation for such genocidal raiding was clearly the desire to take over land. No reference to these events – remembered by the Circassians as 'the bloody March days' – was permitted until 1927, when one of the Red Guard commanders naively explained that it had been essential to 'clear away' these 'ignorant Circassians', who were threatening to 'halt the course of historical events' (!). Adequate examination of what happened had to wait for another 65 years before Adygey scholars were free to write about them.[118]

On 14 March 1918 the Red Army captured Yekaterinodar after storming through Circassian and Karachay territory, and 'Soviet power' was claimed over the whole of North Caucasus. As a result, the Cossacks, along with a host of Circassian refugees, fled south to the mountains. By this time much of the Don Cossack Host had abandoned the White cause, and when Rostov and Novocherkassk fell to the Bolsheviks on 24 February, remnants of the White Volunteer Army, consisting entirely of officers loyal to the Russian Empire, set out on their long march south towards the Caucasus. A month later they reached the foothills, and found a welcome among the Circassians and Kuban Cossacks. This joint Volunteer and Cossack army struck at Yekaterinodar in April, but the death of its commander, General Kornilov, put an end to their campaign, and the Whites, now led by Denikin, had to drag their way north again across the inhospitable steppes towards the Don. North-west Caucasus was thus left in communist hands, and from May was named the 'Kuban--Black Sea Soviet

Republic’. The Bolsheviks followed up their conquest of Yekaterinodar by continuing south along the Black Sea coast and entering Abkhazia. This added further to the confusion in western Georgia, where the Turks were advancing from the south, provoking anti-Kartlian uprisings in Megrelia and Abkhazia which the Georgian National Guard suppressed harshly. However, at the end of March, as the Red Army reached Sukhum, the Abkhazian National Council for Autonomy appealed for help to the Georgians, who pushed the Bolsheviks back to Tuapse.[119]

It was not only on the Black Sea coast that events moved from North to South Caucasia. In November 1917 the Tbilisi-based ‘Transcaucasian’ Commissariat of the Russian Provisional Government had co-opted Heydar Bammat to represent Daghestan. Later, proposals made at a Conference of ‘Transcaucasian’ Muslims in Baku for a Constituent Assembly of the Azerbaijanis and North Caucasian peoples, and a joint ‘Transcaucasia’--Daghestan Assembly, led to rioting by the city's Armenians. Another South Caucasian event during the 1917–18 winter that had repercussions north of the mountains was the Georgian National Guard's crushing of a rebellion in South Osetia. Even more significant were contacts between the Union of Mountain Peoples and Turkey. In March 1918, while the UMP's delegation was in Tbilisi seeking recognition by the ‘Transcaucasian’ parliament (Seim) which was duly granted, another delegation went to Istanbul to solicit support from Muslims there, including many North Caucasian *muhajir*s previously expelled from Russia. Some North Caucasians also joined Achar Georgian delegates in secret discussions about incorporation into Turkey itself. Because of Azerbaijani influence the Mountain Republic was included in the negotiations between Turkey and ‘Transcaucasia’ in Trebizond and later at the Georgian--Turkish conference in Batumi. Finally, Germany also recognized the Mountain Republic – helpfully proposing that it should become part of the German Empire. Thus the strictly local developments among the Muslim peoples of North Caucasus developed a much wider European dimension in early 1918.[120]

South Caucasus: Bolsheviks, Turks, Germans

On 31 October 1917 Shahumyan, aiming to create an appearance of legitimacy for a Bolshevik takeover in Baku, engineered a vote of support for Lenin's coup which caused all Mensheviks and SRs to walk out, leaving the Soviet to the Bolsheviks. Meanwhile democratic politicians in Baku and Tbilisi condemned the Petrograd coup and formed Committees of Public Safety (the one in Baku being quickly disbanded by the Soviet). In Tbilisi an interim government of the Caucasus, the 'Transcaucasian' Commissariat (Zakavkom) of the Russian Provisional Government, was formed to conduct the Constituent Assembly elections in November. In these 'Transcaucasia' as a whole returned most votes for three parties: the Mensheviks, Müsawat and Dashnaḳtsutyun (27%, 25% and 23% respectively) with SRs and Bolsheviks far behind (4.8% and 3.9%), but results varied characteristically in the different national territories. Most Menshevik votes came in Georgia, far exceeding any other party; while in Armenia, Dashnaḳtsutyun[121] inevitably received overwhelming support. In Azerbaijan's rural areas the largest share went to Müsawat and Ittihad,[122] with only small percentages for the SRs and Bolsheviks, but in Baku city the Bolsheviks came first (20%), followed closely by Müsawat, Dashnaḳtsutyun and SRs (19.6%, 18.2% and 16.9% respectively).[123]

The peoples of South Caucasus in 1918 were partly screened from direct involvement in Russia's Civil War by the Caucasus range and the mountain peoples’ stand for independence, but were exposed to other hazards from the south. The Ottoman Young Turk régime, inspired by its world-conquering ideology of ‘pan-Turanism’, aimed to subjugate the Caucasus before moving across the Caspian to extend ‘Turan’ into Central Asia. As Turkey's ally and, to some extent, mentor, Germany also made its presence and policies felt in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Although the Caucasus had been without a Russian viceroy since Grand Duke Nicholas's resignation in March 1917, the Russian army on the Turkish front still wielded some authority until November, when its disintegration left only Armenian and Georgian troops at the disposal of the remaining Russian officers. Civil government of ‘Transcaucasia’ was maintained in Tbilisi, as far as possible, by Zakavkom, which attempted to further the ideals of Russian democracy in the name of the Constituent Assembly, and to continue the war to a victorious conclusion. The first test of its effectiveness came from Bolshevized Russian soldiers who occupied Tbilisi arsenal in October. On 16 November the Georgian Mensheviks’ Red Guards forced them to surrender and took possession of the weaponry stored there. Zakavkom's second trial, on 21 November, was Turkey's proposal of an armistice. This initiated a pattern of events which was to recur over the next six months: when Zakavkom agreed in principle to peace talks, but was inhibited from acting because of loyalty to Russia and its own lack of independence, the Turks started to advance, forcing the ‘Transcaucasian’ government to accept an armistice on Turkish terms on 5 December at Erzinjan.[124]

Gradually the South Caucasian countries were forced to make their own political decisions with regard to themselves, to each other, to neighbouring states and to Russia as it slid into deepening chaos. In Georgia the first National Congress, held from 22 November 1917 under the chairmanship of Noe Zhordania, still declared itself against separation from Russia, but for autonomy within a future democratic Russia. The question of the three 'Transcaucasian' countries forming their own armies, however, quickly gained support. In Georgia a People's Guard had been founded in spring 1917, under the command of General V. Jugeli, and in December the Russian commander-in-chief sanctioned the creation of a Georgian corps. On 26 January 1918 the first Georgian university was founded in Tbilisi by I. Javakhishvili and other scholars. Georgia was also the first to undertake new social developments, initiating a land reform in December 1917 to reallocate landowners' estates among the peasants. In February the political stability of Georgia was reconfirmed by elections to the parliament (National Council) in which the Mensheviks won 72% of the votes in towns and 82% in rural areas.[125]

The Russian command also sanctioned the formation of an Armenian corps, one of whose divisions was commanded by the renowned partisan leader General Andranik Ozanyan, popularly known as 'Andranik' since his exploits against the Turks in the 1890s. This was particularly important for the Armenians, as they strove to defend the population of 'Turkish Armenia' into which the Ottoman armies were now advancing. However, Armenian politicians also had links with the Bolsheviks through Shahumyan and the Soviet in Baku, where in December an Armenian National Council was created. Lenin now declared the right of Turkish Armenia to self-determination, and directed Shahumyan, the special commissar for the Caucasus, to set up a soviet government there. In general the Armenians were greatly influenced by events in Baku with its large Armenian population, where existing political alignments had been confirmed by Soviet elections, which gave the Bolsheviks 29% of the seats, their allies the Left SRs 22%, and the Dashnaks 24%, and where the Bolsheviks collaborated secretly with Armenian nationalists. In December 1917, after supplies to 'Red' Baku were blockaded by Daghestan, a 'Transcaucasian' Muslim Congress had hailed them as allies and proposed an Azerbaijan--Daghestan union. At the same time the city Soviet's creation of a revolutionary committee and introduction of martial law after the resulting inter-ethnic food riots increased Azerbaijani resentment against the conspicuous role of the Armenians in the local army. Consequently, when the Müsawat party gained only 12% of seats in the elections, it came into conflict with the Soviet. By February 1918, as rumours reached Baku of Armenian atrocities against Muslims in Erzinjan and Yerevan, Azerbaijanis started moving out of the city in anticipation of Armenian violence. Thus, increasing political activity in Azerbaijan was accompanied by the racial antagonism which always lay near the surface and which the Bolsheviks did nothing to defuse, since conflict between native communities strengthened their own position. The Azerbaijanis too began to arm themselves by disarming contingents of homeward-bound Russian troops, especially in Ganja district in December 1917.[126]

On 1 January 1918 Turkey renewed its pressure on 'Transcaucasia' by proposing peace negotiations and participation by Caucasian delegates in the deliberations at Brest-Litovsk, but again Zakavkom insisted that it was unauthorized to act before the convocation of the Petrograd

Constituent Assembly. However, once the Bolsheviks had disrupted the latter on 6 January ‘Transcaucasia’ could not avoid contemplating independence. Turkey now used ostensible violence against Muslims by Armenians and Russian troops as a pretext for breaking the armistice on the Caucasian front.[127] Consequently, despite the Georgians’ reluctance and the Armenians’ deep apprehension of strife, on 23 February politicians of the three communities created a joint ‘Transcaucasian’ parliament under the name Seim.[128] Seats were allocated to the different nationalities according to the Constituent Assembly election results: thirty-three to the Georgian Mensheviks, thirty to the Azerbaijani Müsawat, twenty-seven to the Armenian Dashnaktsutyun, four to the Bolsheviks and six to other parties. A Bolshevik attempt to disrupt the opening of the Seim was dispersed by rifle fire, and Shahumyan fled to Baku.[129]

The Seim's first debates were about Turkish peace proposals, but as a delegation was about to depart on 3 March for a conference at Trebizond everything was disrupted by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. According to this the Russian Bolshevik government, disregarding its supposed commitment to self-determination, gave the Turks not only all of eastern Armenia including Kars, but Georgian Batumi as well. Thus the Armenians were thrown on the mercy of the Turks, Georgia lost its port on the Black Sea, and only pro-Turkish Azerbaijanis could accept the treaty with equanimity. In vain the Seim protested that, as these terms had been arranged over its head, they could not be binding on ‘Transcaucasia’. When the Trebizond conference met on 14 March 1918 the Turks, ignoring the Brest treaty's terms, demanded that the ceded territories be evacuated immediately, adding menace to their demand by occupying Erzurum. The ‘Transcaucasian’ politicians were baffled, since they could not negotiate internationally if they did not represent a recognized state. Moreover, such strains had been placed on the federation that little unity of purpose remained among the Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis. They therefore began to consider declaring independence separately – especially some Azerbaijanis, who saw this as a step towards possible union with Turkey.[130]

At the end of March 1918 an event in Soviet Baku[131] exacerbated the antagonism between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. When a ship from Persia arrived carrying a detachment of the Caucasian Cavalry Division, the Bolsheviks ordered them to be disarmed before landing, and arrested their commander. The Azerbaijanis protested, demanding that, as the Russians and Armenians were armed, they too should have military units. Shahumyan's Soviet – a coalition of Bolsheviks, Left SRs and Dashnaks – responded by shelling Azerbaijani quarters of the city, and the Bolshevik revolution committee called for an attack on Müsawat. A two-day assault on Azerbaijani protesters by Armenian troops forced the Azerbaijanis to capitulate.[132] Azerbaijanis claimed that in the street fighting 12,000 Muslims were killed. These ‘March Days’ gave the Bolsheviks a pretext for closing down all ‘bourgeois’ newspapers in Baku, disbanding the Armenian troops, and carrying out a coup d’état which left them in full command of the city, and inspired with renewed ardour to extend ‘Soviet power’ in all directions, including nationalization of the Baku oil industry.[133]

News of these events in Baku caused much concern in the ‘Transcaucasian’ Seim which (perhaps unaware that Moscow already had its hands full fighting Muslim opposition in Kazan and Turkestan) anticipated a Bolshevik attack on Tbilisi. Accordingly, it sent Georgian and Azerbaijani troops by rail towards Baku, while Najmuddin's Daghestanis were to link up with Azerbaijanis to the north of the city. These forces advanced to within six miles of Baku before being repulsed by the Bolsheviks, who also succeeded in re-establishing the sea link with Port Petrovsk, and sent a force south to occupy Lankaran.[134]

The Turks kept up pressure on politicians in Tbilisi: at Trebizond ‘Transcaucasia's’ representative, Aḳaḳi Chkhenkeli, first acceded to the terms of the Treaty of Brest, then three days later, on 13 April 1918, the Seim declared war on Turkey. During this eight-day war the Turks, assisted by the Acḥars, occupied Batumi. Through the mediation of the Mountain Republic the Seim delegates then returned to the conference, and on 22 April ‘Transcaucasia’ accepted the latest Turkish peace offer and declared itself independent. Thereafter, overcoming determined Armenian resistance, Turkey captured Kars, thus gaining all the territory allotted to it by the Bolsheviks at Brest. The unity of independent ‘Transcaucasia’ lasted scarcely a month, however, as the fundamental differences between its three members obscured the necessity of acting together. In early May, at negotiations in Turkish-occupied Batumi, the Turks pressed their advantage: going far beyond the Brest agreement, they demanded Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Alexandropol and Echmiadzin districts – tantamount to annexing the whole of Armenia. Moreover, there was a proposal from some North Caucasian Muslims for incorporation into Turkey, and Azerbaijani leaders too were having secret discussions with Turkey on the same theme.[135]

At this point, in May 1918, the German military attaché in the Caucasus, General Otto von Lossow, developed an interest in ‘Transcaucasia’, particularly Georgia. After the seizure of Batumi, Turkey's way to the Caspian and the ‘Turanian’ lands beyond seemed to lie open, but Germany had no desire to see the Ottoman Empire competing there with its own Middle Eastern interests. Yet another rival in the power game came into play: the Turks’ excuse for breaking their truce and advancing against Alexandropol and Julfa was the British presence in Persia. Western politicians were concerned about Armenia, and their talk about guaranteeing its self-determination raised the Armenians’ hopes that they might receive special support from the Allies. On the other hand, Azerbaijan was planning to abandon Armenia to its fate by making an alliance with Georgia. The Georgians, however, distrusted this proposal and turned to von Lossow, who proposed a Caucasian insurrection against Russia, followed by a German protectorate over Georgia. (This idea was adumbrated as early as 1914 among the Georgian Committee in Berlin, and German officers had begun recruiting Georgian prisoners of war in Turkey for a Georgian Legion. Far from producing thousands of Georgians to fight against Russia, however, this attracted only a few hundred.) Lossow's advice was that Georgia's only chance of avoiding Turkish occupation was to declare independence as a German protectorate – at the price of economic concessions to Germany. Accordingly, on 26 May 1918 (the very day on which Turkey presented ‘Transcaucasia’ with an ultimatum for fulfillment of its demands) Ereḳle Tṣereteli informed the Seim that the ‘Transcaucasian’ Federation had proved unviable because of its members’ differing attitudes to Turkish aggression, so that each of the three peoples must now defend its own interests separately. Thereupon the Seim dissolved itself, and the National Council of Georgia declared independence.[136]

[1] Simon, 'Church, state and society', pp. 199, 200–1, 213–15.

[2] 'Mensheviks' and 'Bolsheviks' were nicknames for, respectively, the less extreme and more extreme communists or 'Social Democrats'.

[3] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1177–81; H. Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, pp. 598–602, 607, 610–11.

[4] J. N. Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour: Russian History 1812–1971*, Oxford, 1973, p. 160.

[5] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1154, 1196–9, 1199–1200, 1205, 1359, 1361, 1365, 1389; H. Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, pp. 626–7.

[6] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXVII, pp. 238, 285–6, 344, 347, 352–4; Suny, *Making*, pp. 91–2.

[7] Astrakhan, situated in the Volga delta, was an inconvenient port as passengers had to be transported by tender from the city far out into the Caspian, where they were transferred to a sea-going ship: Baedeker, *Russia*, pp. 435–6, 462.

[8] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, p. 325; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXVII, p. 113; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 21, 64–5, 208 n. 2. *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, pp. 210–12, states that typical monthly pay for the same work was:

Russians 19–20 rubles, local Azerbaijanis 12–15, Persians 5–7.

[9] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 295–7, 302–6, 308–9, 313–19, 322–6; *Azärbäyjan SSR atlasy*, edited by H. A. Aliyev, *et al.*, Moscow, 1979, p. 12; Baedeker, *Russia*, pp. 457–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 20–3.

[10] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 306, 325–6; Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 44, 245–6 n. 83.

[11] Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 19.

[12] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 297–9, 301–2, 323; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 19.

[13] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 319–20, 323, 327–8; Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 35; Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1090–1; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, map p. xiii.

[14] Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 38–45.

[15] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 41–2.

[16] Aliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, p. 329.

[17] L. Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 1st edn, London, 1960, pp. 57–9, 68, 86, 88–9, 93, 96–7, 104–10, 113, 117, 120–2, 128.

[18] Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour*, pp. 176–7.

[19] H. Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, pp. 629, 636, 649–54; Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour*, pp. 183–4.

[20] K. Fitzlyon and T. Browning, *Before the Revolution: a View of Russia under the Last Tsar*, Harmondsworth, 1982, pp. 32–3; H. Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, pp. 636, 648; Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour*, pp. 177–9.

[21] H. Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, pp. 638–42; Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour*, pp. 173–4, 188–9.

[22] *Novyy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1911–16, vol. I, p. v. The publication of this 48-volume *New Encyclopaedia* ceased at vol. XXIX because of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

[23] Allen, *Ukraine*, pp. 272–4, 306–7; Hrushevskyy, *History*, pp. 517–20; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, pp. 341, 367–70.

[24] L. Kochan and R. Abraham, *The Making of Modern Russia*, 2nd edn, Harmondsworth, 1983, p. 291.

[25] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1167–70, 1173, 1366–72.

[26] W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution 1917–1921*, 2 vols., London, 1935, vol. I, pp. 322–4, 343–4, 351–2, 355; *Istoriya Sibiri*, edited by A. P. Okladnikov, *et al.*, 5 vols., Leningrad, 1968, vol. III, pp. 475–6; vol. IV, pp. 28, 55.

[27] Doroshenko, *History*, pp. 615–16; Allen, *Ukraine*, p. 271.

[28] I. B. Shekhtman, 'Yevreyskoye obshchestvennost na Ukraine 1917–1919', in Ya. G. Frumkin, *et al.*, *Kniga o russkom yevreystve 1917–1967*, New York, 1968, p. 22.

[29] R. Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism 1917–1923*, revised edn, Cambridge, MA, 1964, p. 53.

[30] Hrushevskyy, *History*, pp. 523–5; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, pp. 345–6.

[31] Doroshenko, *History*, p. 620; Hrushevskyy, *History*, pp. 526–8; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 59–61.

[32] Allen, *Ukraine*, pp. 281–2.

[33] Doroshenko, *History*, p. 621.

[34] Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 190–2.

[35] Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 69–73, 114.

[36] Doroshenko, *History*, p. 628; Hrushevskyy, *History*, p. 538; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, p. 352.

[37] D. A. Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and Legacy*, translated and edited by Harold Shukman, London, 1995, p. 73.

[38] V. I. Lenin, 'Sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya i pravo natsiy na samoopredeleniye' [1916], in his *Sochineniya*, 3rd edn,

edited by N. I. Bukharin, *et al.*, Moscow, 1935, vol. XIX, p. 39.

[39] V. Vynnychenko, quoted by Subtelny, *Ukraine*, p. 354.

[40] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. I, pp. 342, 352; P. Dotsenko, *The Struggle for a Democracy in Siberia, 1917–1920*, Stanford, 1983, p. 6; *Istoriya Sibiri*, vol. III, p. 476.

[41] Hosking, *History*, p. 73.

[42] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1382, 1392–3, 1434–5.

[43] A. Bilmanis, *A History of Latvia*, Princeton, 1951, p. 286.

[44] *Tretyi Vserossiyskiy s"yezd Sovetov rabochikh, soldatskikh i krestyanskikh deputatov*, Petrograd, 1918, p. 17, quoted by A. L. Litvin, *Kazan: vremya grazhdanskoy voyny*, Kazan, 1991, p. 7.

[45] Lenin, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy*, vol. L, pp. 59–60, quoted by Litvin, *Kazan*, p. 22.

[46] Volkogonov, *Lenin*, pp. 68–70.

[47] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 893–4, 1221, 1336–7, 1392–3, 1425, 1460.

[48] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 59–61,70–3; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 58–62, 77, 116, 129–30, 141; S. M. Dimanshteyn, *Revolyutsiya i natsionalnyy*

vopros: dokumenty i materialy po istorii natsionalnogo voprosa v Rossii i SSSR v XX veke, 4 vols., Moscow, 1930, vol. III, pp. 327–36, 370–6; Ishaki, *Idel-Ural*, p. 55; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 127.

[49] Koran, 2:28, 4:34.

[50] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 66 n. 7, 78–94, 98–102, 104; *Programs of the Muslim Political Parties 1917–1920*, Oxford, 1985, p. 6.

[51] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 112–28; Dimanshteyn, *Revolyutsiya i natsionalnyy vopros*, pp. 307–9, 315–20; *Programs of the Muslim Political Parties*, p. 34.

[52] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 66–7; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 122–8, 176, 181, 192; Litvin, *Kazan*, p. 169; M. Sultangaliyev, ‘Klevetnikam’, in his *Statyi, vystupleniya, dokumenty*, Kazan, 1992, pp. 44–6.

[53] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 249–441; Hovannisyan, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 12, 14, 64; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 183–6, 196–7; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 79.

[54] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 241–2, 244, 252, 284, 289, 329, 331, 363; Hovannisyan, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 14; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 261–3; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 78. Figures vary.

[55] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1396, 1398.

[56] N. Keddie and M. Amanat, ‘Iran under the later Qajars, 1848–1922’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, pp. 186–9, 191, 205–8; G. R. G. Hambly, ‘The Pahlavi autocracy: Riżā Shāh, 1921–1941’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, pp. 214–15.

[57] Work on the line was suspended at Ereğli because of international objections, but resumed after a German–Russian agreement in 1914, and went ahead swiftly as far as Nusaybin, then halted again until completion in 1940: Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1290–1; *Der Kleine Brockhaus*, 2 vols., Wiesbaden, 1950, vol. I, p. 90.

[58] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 231–2, 234–5, 240, 248 n. 2, 384; Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1333–4; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 12; Suny, *Making*, p. 179; A. J. P. Taylor, *The First World War: an Illustrated History*, Harmondsworth, 1966, pp. 42, 114, 116.

[59] Kaloyev, *Zemledeliye*, p. 32; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 105–6.

[60] A. F. Selivanov, ‘Kubanskaya oblast’, in *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XVI, p. 918; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 109; R. E. H. Mellor, *Geography of the USSR*, London, 1964, pp. 236–7.

[61] Although Stalin returned to Baku for another brief stay, there seems no reason to write of his ‘years in Baku’: R. G. Suny, ‘A journeyman for the revolution: Stalin and the labour movement in Baku, June 1907–May 1908’, *Soviet Studies*, 1972, 23, pp. 373–5, 394. See also R. Conquest, *Stalin, Breaker of Nations*, London, 1998, pp. 43–4.

[62] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 76–7; F. Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia (1917–1921)*, Oxford, 1951, pp. 184–5; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 261; Suny, *Making*, pp. 151–5, 164, 173–4, 178; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 79–81.

[63] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 21, 28–9, 31, 40; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 12, 14–15; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 263; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 64–5, 106–15; Suny, *Making*, p. 180.

[64] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 21–5, 29, 31–4, 50–2; R. G. Suny, *The Baku Commune, 1917–1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution*, Princeton, 1972, pp. 52–9; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 22–3, 25, 34–5, 65–6, 69.

[65] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 12–13; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 76; G. Wheeler, *Soviet Central Asia*, p. 74.

[66] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 18–22, 41–69, citing the biography by Dz. Gatuyev, *Zelimkhan*, Orzhonikidze, 1965. Which language *abrek* originally came from is much disputed: see M. Vasmer, *Etimologicheskiy slovar russkogo yazyka*, translation from German and supplements by O. N. Trubachov, edited and with foreword by B. A. Larin, 4 vols., Moscow, 1964–73, vol. I, p. 57. See also Bobrovnikov, V. O., 'Abrechestvo na poreformennom Kavkaze: istoki, osobennosti, posledstviya', *Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 2001, no. 4 (122), pp. 158–91.

[67] A. Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya i kontrrevolyutsiya v Dagestane*, Makhachkala, 1927, p. 118.

[68] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, p. 284; vol. III, p. 39; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 276, 285–6; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 530–2, 594. In Russian, frequently echoed in English, the Caucasian Cavalry Division was commonly referred to by the term 'Dikaya diviziya' ('Wild' or 'Savage Division') although in fact they developed a reputation for reliability and discipline. Cf. I. Natirboff, 'The Circassians' part in the Civil War', *Caucasian Review*, 1955, no. 2, p. 138.

[69] Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 276–82; D. N. Merkulov, *Rus mnogolikaya: dumy o natsionalnom*, Moscow, 1990, pp. 199, 201; A. P. Yermolin, *Revolutsiya i kazachestvo (1917–1920 gg.)*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 18, 34, 25–6.

[70] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, p. 241 note; G. A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917–1921*, Notre Dame, 1966, pp. 5–8; Florinsky *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1436–41; P. Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization in the North Caucasus', [pt. 1], *Caucasian Review*, 1955, no. 1, pp. 51, 53; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 531–2; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 76.

[71] Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1366–72; W. G. Rosenberg, *Liberals in the Russian Revolution: the Constitutional Democratic Party, 1917–1921*, Princeton, 1974, pp. 59–63.

[72] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 15; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 195; Lang, *Modern History of*

Georgia, pp. 193, 195–6; E. Melia, 'The Georgian Orthodox Church', in R. H. Marshall, *et al.*, eds., *Aspects of Religion in the Soviet Union, 1917–1967*, Chicago, 1971, pp. 228–9; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 119–20; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 84–5.

[73] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 47, 64–5, 72–3, 78–81; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 70–3, 75–6; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 20–1; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 41, 47–8; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 197, 198; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 20; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 74–89, 154–6; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 43–4, 51–6, 73–5, 85–95; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 10–11.

[74] Quoted from *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya*, 1903, no. 18, by A. Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya: sovetskiy tip kolonializma*, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1988, p. 16.

[75] A. Cobban, *National Self-Determination*, London, 1944, pp. 45–6; A. Bullock and O. Stallybrass, eds., *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, London, 1977, pp. 565–6; Lenin, 'Sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya', pp. 37–46.

[76] Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, p. 25; *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Moscow, 1977, p. 56; B. Nahaylo and V. Swoboda, *Soviet Disunion: a History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR*, London, 1990, pp. 14–28.

[77] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, p. 19; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 289–94; A. K. Kasimenko, *Istoriya Ukrainskoy SSR: populyarnyy ocherk*, Kiev, 1965, p. 261; Takho-Godi,

Revolyutsiya, pp. 33–4, 164–6; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 54–7, 62–4.

[78] Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 209, 212–14; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 64–5, 76–8, 89, 91.

[79] P. Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia, 1918: the First Year of the Volunteer Army*, Berkeley, 1971, pp. 104–8; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 215–17; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 38–9, 49, 55, 64–5, 78–9.

[80] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 41–2; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 218–19; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 151, 170, 172, 175.

[81] Kenez, *Civil War*, pp. 94–117.

[82] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, p. 130; F. Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, London, 1967, p. 549; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 298–9; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 416.

[83] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, p. 285.

[84] *Ibid*., vol. II, p. 135; F. Fischer, *Germany's Aims*, p. 549.

[85] Kenez, *Civil War*, pp. 130, 236–40.

[86] Doroshenko, *History*, pp. 633–5, map opp. p. 648; Hrushevskyy, *History*, map opp. p. 600.

[87] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 131–2, 137–8, 143–6; Kenez, *Civil War*, pp. 181–3; Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 309; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 418–19, 448, 464; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 90–1; N. Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta*, revised edn, London, 1979, p. 165.

[88] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 80–3, 142–3; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 260–1; Kenez, *Civil War*, pp. 220–30; Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 306.

[89] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 216–24; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 281–9.

[90] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. III, p. 215; vol. XI, pp. 423–5; vol. XIV, p. 457; vol. XXIII, pp. 217–18; vol. XXIX, pp. 950–1; vol. XLI, pp. 645, 918–19. See also Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 12, 80n.

[91] Gasprinskiy, *Russkoye musulmanstvo*, p. 5; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 81–6.

[92] Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 79–81.

[93] E. H. Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia: The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923*, Harmondsworth, 1966, vol. I, p. 322; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 184–6.

[94] P. Borawski, *Tatarzy w dawnej Rzeczpospolitej*, Warsaw, 1986, pp. 285–8; Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, p. 38; F. Fischer, *Germany's Aims*, pp. 545–6; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 184–7; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 355; Rosenberg, *Liberals*, p. 361.

[95] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, p. 167; Rosenberg, *Liberals*, pp. 361–9, 372–3.

[96] Rosenberg, *Liberals*, pp. 357, 376, 370–1.

[97] Borawski, *Tatarzy*, pp. 289–90; Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 84, 135–8; Carr, *Bolshevik Revolution*, p. 322; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 188–9.

[98] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 322–32.

[99] R. Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine*, London, 1986, pp. 54–7; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VIII, map p. 58; K. Sanukov, 'Telegramma, podpisannaya Leninym', *Selskiye vesti*, Yoshkar-Ola, 3 and 10 November 1994; N. Yefimova, *Mari-el segodnya*, Yoshkar-Ola, 1990, pp. 37–9.

[100] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 20–1; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 1], p. 49; Studenetskaya, *Odezhda*, p. 38; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 89–90; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 159.

[101] B. Baytugan, 'The North Caucasus', *Studies on the Soviet Union* (ns), 1971, 2, 1, pp. 1, 12, 20; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 15; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 1], pp. 47–54; [pt. 2], pp. 45–53; Natirboff, 'Circassians' part', p. 138; Traho, Cherkesy, p. 67.

[102] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 104; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 1], pp. 48–51; Lang, *Modern History of*

Georgia, p. 198; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 13–14.

[103] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 20; *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. XXX, cols. 413–14; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 12–15, 22; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], pp. 46–7; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 10, 11; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 217; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 2–3, 15–18.

[104] Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, p. 171; Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 12, 20–1; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 64–112; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 20–5; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], pp. 45, 47–8; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 11; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 89–90; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 13–14, 21, 22, 24–5, 34, 37–8. In accounts of this period dates and events are sometimes inaccurate and contradictory.

[105] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. I, pp. 158, 277–81, 301; Florinsky, *Russia*, vol. II, pp. 1369–70; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 23, 39; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 1], pp. 51–4; [pt. 2], pp. 46, 48; Natirboff, 'Circassians' part', pp. 1, 138; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 15–20; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 112–13; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 49.

[106] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 24; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 41; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 12–14, 19–20; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 48; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 21–2, 33–4, 83, 164, 167–9; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 47.

[107] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. I, p. 378; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 215; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 54–5, 65.

[108] Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 14; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 35; Kosok, ‘Revolution and sovietization’, [pt. 2], pp. 48–9; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 218–19; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 182–6; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 86, 170–5; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 47, 65, 71–2.

[109] Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 86, 242.

[110] Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, pp. 14–15; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 37; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 218–19; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 182–6; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 34–5, 46, 83–6, 176–7, 242; Terek Regional Soviet of People's Commissars, ‘Dekret no. 25. Po zemelnomu delu’, 10 March 1918, *Ibid*., pp. 176–7; M. S. Totoyev, *et al*., eds., *Ocherki istorii Checheno-Ingushskoy ASSR s drevneyshikhh vremyon do nashikh dney*, 2 vols., Groznyy, 1972, vol. II, pp. 27–9; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 79–80.

[111] In June the British mission supported the Terek Cossacks in an abortive revolt, during which Colonel G. D. Pike was killed by the Bolsheviks. In November a British mission and its leader Major G. M. Goldsmith were arrested in Vladikavkaz as spies, and removed to Astrakhan to prevent their rescue by pro-British Ingush: A. Ivanov, ed., ‘Gorskaya kontrrevolutsiya i interventy’, *Krasnyy arkhiv*, 1935, vol. 68, pp. 137–8; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 67; M. Kettle, *Russia and the Allies 1917–1920*, vol. II, *The Road to Intervention, March–November 1918*, London, 1988, p. 369; J. M. Meijer,

ed., *The Trotsky Papers 1917–1922*, The Hague, 1964, vol. I, p. 180; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 43.

[112] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 16; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 176–7; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 109, 112.

[113] Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, pp. 174–5; Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 21; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 42.

[114] Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 38–9.

[115] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 42–3; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 38–41, 132.

[116] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 21; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 43–5, 47–8; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 49.

[117] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 1, 15; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 48–56, 61, 63–5; G. I. Kakagasanov and I. M. Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki i popytki yeyo vozrozhdeniya', *Nash Dagestan*, 1993, no. 165–6, p. 30; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], pp. 49–50; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 60–2; A. Tsalikov [Tsalykatty), 'Kavkaz nash gordyy vozroditsya', *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 1, p. 8.

[118] F. A. Ozova, 'Iz istorii mezhnatsionalnogo konflikta na Kubani (1918 g.)', in N. F. Bugay and D. Kh. Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz: natsionalnye otnosheniya (istoriografiya, problemy)*, Maykop, 1992, pp. 44–51; M. H. Shebzukhov, 'Krasnyy terror v Adygeye', *Ibid*., pp. 292–306.

[119] Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 14; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. I, pp. 380–6; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 190–1, 233; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 228; Natirboff, ‘Circassians’ part’, pp. 139–41; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 27, 29–31, 33–7, 41–2; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, pp. 216–17; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 79.

[120] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 34; Kakagasanov and Musayev, ‘Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki’, p. 29; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 68, 190; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 228; Suny, *Baku Commune*, p. 188; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 103–4, 121–4, 126–7; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 60–1.

[121] The full name in Armenian of this national-democratic party is Hay Heghapokhaḳan Dashnaḳtsutyun – ‘Armenian Revolutionary Federation’: Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 16.

[122] Their names in Azerbaijanian Persian-Arabic were Müsawat ‘Equality’ and Rusyada Muslumanlyq Ittihad – ‘Union of Muslims in Russia’: Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 88.

[123] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 82; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 86–7, 107–8, 147; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 34; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 65–6; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 157–8, 164–8, 176–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 95, 100–2, 105–8.

[124] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 449–50, 457, 465, 467–8; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 34–5;

Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 109, 134; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 57–9, 81–2; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 201; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 119–20.

[125] V. Guruli and M. Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii (XIX–XX veka): uchebnik dlya IX klassa*, Tbilisi, 2001, pp. 113–14, 119–20; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 80–1, 184–90; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 211–12; Suny, *Making*, pp. 198–200.

[126] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 83–5; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 113–15, 143–4, 147–9; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 68–9, 82, 83, 85–6, 91–2; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 257, 263, 268; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 183–8, 191, 197–200; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 103–4, 112, 114–15.

[127] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 459–61; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 119–20, 122, 131–4; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 884–7; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 120.

[128] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 96; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 109–12. The Polish term ‘Sejm’ ‘gathering’, ‘assembly’, was adopted in several subject countries of the Russian Empire as they acheived independence at various dates, e.g. Poland itself, Finland and later Lithuania and Latvia, presumably because it evoked Poland's determined striving for independence.

[129] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 125–6; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 87–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 107–12.

[130] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 104, 130–4; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 89–97; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 202–3; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 121–4.

[131] Varying accounts, even of the dates of these 'March Days' in Baku, exist, arising partly, perhaps, from the change from the 'Old Style' Julian calendar and the 'New Style' Gregorian calendar adopted on 14 February 1918; but see Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 69.

[132] According to subsequent Soviet accounts this represented the smashing of the anti-Soviet mutiny of the Musavatists, the name applied by the Bolsheviks to the Azerbaijanis' anti-revolutionary party, which challenged the Communists from 1917 to 1920, when it was suppressed.

[133] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 85–6; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 136, 264; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 147–9; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 47; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 69–76; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 199–201; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 214–27; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 114–18, 135. On casualities, Pipes, *Formation*, p. 200, quotes the communist Shahumyan's figure of 3,000.

[134] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 46; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 97; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 263–4; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 117–18; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 49.

[135] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 151, 157; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki',

p. 30; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 97–110; D. M. Lang, ‘British policy in Transcaucasia, 1918–1919’, in *Gorski vijenac: a Garland offered to Professor Elizabeth Mary Hill*, edited by R. Auty, L. R. Lewitter and A. P. Vlasto, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 204–6; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 120, 123–6.

[136] W. Bihl, *Die Kaukasus-Politik der Mittelmächte*, Vienna, 1975, vol. I, pp. 60, 63–8, 74–6; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 112–13, 115–24, 172–3, 181; Lang, ‘British policy’, p. 205; Suny, *Making*, pp. 192–3; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 127.

11 Independent Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and North Caucasus

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Self-determination and reality in ‘Transcaucasia’

The idea of creating autonomous national entities in Transcaucasia was not entirely new. In 1905, at a conference convened by the Russian viceroy to discuss the introduction of *zemstvo*s, Armenian delegates had proposed changes in administrative divisions which would have created an Armenian territory consisting of Yerevan province, parts of Kars and Tbilisi provinces, and the mountainous districts of Yelizavetpol, Jevanshir, Shushi and Zangezur corresponding to historical Karabagh. However, when the opportunity of implementing this scheme arose and Armenia followed Georgia's example by declaring statehood on 28 May 1918, its leaders, Hovhannes Kachaznuni and Alexander Khatisyan,

> shuddered before the prospect of independence. Having been abandoned and hurled upon the mercy of the same Turkish rulers who had annihilated the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, they searched desperately for a glimmer of hope. It was detected in the undisguised wrath of Germany against [Turkey's] rulers and in the first substantial Armenian victory on the battlefield [at Yerevan]. The Armenian Council… realiz[ing] that there existed no feasible alternative, timorously sanctioned the creation of the Republic of Armenia.[1]

Territorially, ‘the remnants of the Armenian people were left a mangled piece of land that, for lack of a better term, they called a republic…a barren and isolated land, abounding with rocks and mountains, orphans and refugees, heartache and misery’.[2] It was galling to the Armenian middle class that, under German protection, the Georgians assumed possession of all the assets in Tbilisi which had been amassed largely through Armenian enterprise. It was in Tbilisi that the Armenian cabinet declared independence and, although the future capital, Yerevan, was being held for their government by the forces of two redoubtable generals, Aram Manukyan and Drasdamat Kanayan (‘Dro’), whom many Armenians regard as the real founders of the republic, Armenian politicians were unwilling to leave a capital which they considered to be as much theirs as the Georgians’, and postponed moving until July. When they did go, some said the satisfaction of the Georgians was undisguised and their treatment of the Armenians shabby, whereas even the Azerbaijanis greeted them as they passed through Muslim territory on their way to the devastation that awaited them in the surroundings of Yerevan.[3]

‘Russian’ Azerbaijan too was declared independent on 28 May 1918 by the anti-Bolshevik politicians of Müsawat and other nationalist parties based in Ganja, with Fathali Khan Khoyskiy as its prime minister. It was with this Azerbaijan provisional government, not communist Baku, that the Turkish government negotiated,[4] and as cordial links already existed between them the treaty simply confirmed their alliance, avoiding confrontation with Germany or Russia by not explicitly acknowledging Azerbaijan's independence. Similarly, after Germany told Turkey in June to withdraw all its soldiers from the Caucasus, a Turkish military expedition to Azerbaijan aiming to seize Baku and its oil was cloaked under the guise of an ‘Army of Islam’. This consisted of Ottoman soldiers, an Azerbaijanian National Corps (derived from the Caucasian Cavalry Division and led by the ex-tsarist general ^{c}Ali-Agha Shikhlinskiy), Daghestanis and local irregulars. The supreme commander was a Young Turk – Enver Pasha's brother Nuri.[5]

Threatened by this force of some 17,000 men (whose appearance in Ganja had already inspired a Müsawat revolt in Baku), Shahumyan's Soviet rallied its army, into which local Armenian units had been integrated, with exhortations to save the Baku ‘proletariat’ and the peoples of the Caucasus in general, from ‘merciless annihilation’ by Turkish *pashas*, Müsawatist lords and ‘the Georgian Menshevik gentry party’.[6] Although the Azerbaijani peasantry were known to be anti-Bolshevik, Shahumyan deluded himself that they, along with their ‘brothers’ in Georgia and Armenia, would rise to support his Baku army. On 12 June the Bolshevik force, consisting largely of Armenians, advanced on Ganja, a ‘hotbed of Muslim counter-revolution’, and reached Lake Sevan (in Azerbaijani Göychay). There it was stopped by Turkey's ‘Army of Islam’ and Georgian militia, and pushed back to Baku, which came under siege in late July. Inter-ethnic violence again broke out: as the Red Army's Armenians allegedly committed outrages against Muslims during their campaign, the Turkish–Azerbaijani army now massacred Armenians as it advanced.[7]

By now Lenin's government, despite its rhetoric against ‘Western capitalism’ and militarism, was having secret contacts with the German ambassador in Moscow. Discussions about communist ‘Russia’ supplying oil to Germany had begun in April 1918, and apprehension in London concerning this potential reinforcement of

Germany's military power caused Britain to become involved in the confused political situation in Baku, where dissatisfaction with Shahumyan's government was increasing. There was a food shortage, and in June, during the Left SR revolt in Russia, the Baku SRs organized a demonstration to demand new elections to the city's Soviet, and the resignation of Shahumyan. Yet another element was added to the variegated forces fighting around Baku when on 5 July the Osetian colonel Lazar Bicherakhov (brother of Giorgi Bicherakhov) arrived from Persia with his Cossack detachment. Although he was already collaborating with General Dunsterville, a representative of 'British imperialism', L. Bicherakhov convinced Shahumyan that he wanted to assist in the defence of Baku against the Turks, and he was given command over the communist forces. Two weeks later, when the defence line had been pushed back to the outskirts of Baku, Bicherakhov and his Cossacks unexpectedly defected and moved north into Daghestan, where they captured Darband from the Bolsheviks.[8]

On 3 July 1918 Shahumyan and his Bolshevik colleagues dissolved the Baku Soviet and attempted to flee to Astrakhan, but were arrested.[9] Next day a new government, the 'Centro-Caspian Dictatorship', took over, consisting mainly of Russian SRs and Armenians, acting in the name of the Constituent Assembly. The Dictatorship sent a request to Dunsterville in Anzali to come and organize the defence of Baku against the Army of Islam, and he arrived on 17 August. While he acknowledged an appeal from the Baku Armenians for protection, his official mission was to prevent the oilfield from falling into Turkish or German hands, to take control of the Caspian and to eradicate Bolshevik power there. He soon realized that this was impossible: the Russian and Armenian soldiers were disorganized and undisciplined, and 'Only the weakness of the enemy allowed Baku to hold out.'

Within a month Dunsterville pulled his force out and returned to Persia.[10]

On 15 September Turkish and Azerbaijani troops entered Baku, the Ganja Azerbaijani government of Khan Khoyskiy was installed and another massacre of Armenians ensued. The Turkish government signed an armistice with the Allies at Mudros (30 October), and withdrew to its 1914 borders, except for a number of officers who took service in Azerbaijan and Daghestan. Many Azerbaijanis were not unhappy to see their allies go, since the dictatorial manner of the pashas and their interference in local affairs – suppressing trade unions and deporting political leaders, including Räsulzadä – had greatly reduced Azerbaijan's pro-Turkish sympathies.[11] In Baku, where the return of British troops was anticipated, preparations began for democratic elections by 24 November 1918. As the time in hand was obviously insufficient it was decided to postpone the general election for a year,[12] and the Azerbaijani National Council which had participated in the Transcaucasian Seim was reconstituted as an interim ‘parliament’, including eleven Armenian deputies (other Armenians boycotted it).[13] In any case, independent Azerbaijan ‘was ruled not so much by its Parliament as by a combination of…Musavat, the fabulously rich owners of the Baku oilfields, and the feudal landowners of western Azerbaijan’.[14] As the latter refused to implement the land reform which had been adopted by the ‘Transcaucasian’ Seim and the Müsawat party, peasant unrest was widespread. Apart from this, and the perennial problem of Azerbaijani–Armenian relations, independent Azerbaijan showed a progressive spirit, founding a university and proclaiming a National Charter which included full civil and political rights to all citizens, irrespective not only of ethnic origin, religion and class, but also of sex,[15] and it has been claimed that Azerbaijan was the first Muslim country in the world to allow women to vote – in principle at least: in practice, because of usurpation by the communists, free elections were not held for the next 70 years.

The sequel to the Turkish and German armistices was a partial occupation of the Caucasus by British troops, who held Baku until August 1919 and Batumi until July 1920, with smaller contingents in other places, including Novorossiysk and Port Petrovsk. In Baku the British force, mainly consisting of 2,000 soldiers from India commanded by Major-General W. M. Thomson, arrived from Anzali on 17 November 1918, with the task of establishing order and maintaining peace in a city where near-famine prevailed.[16] Although Thomson was cautious in his dealings with local politicians (echoing Dunsterville's impressions by writing that throughout Transcaucasia 'politicians with high-sounding titles…talk incessantly to the exclusion of work'),[17] he became favourably impressed with Khan Khoyskiy and, in the absence of any central authority in Russia, recognized the Azerbaijani government *de facto*, pending a decision by the Peace Conference in Paris on the eventual status of the country – whether independent or as 'part of Russia'.[18] Thomson's opinion was that the British presence was not unwelcome to the peoples of Transcaucasia, but that they resented the Allies' support for the White Russians' aim of restoring the Russian Empire: 'They hate Russia and would vastly prefer to be a protectorate of Britain or France as a guarantee against oppression. Their ambition is independence and they ask now for an answer to the question, "Do the Allies mean to live up to their word about self-determination of small nations so far as the subject races of Russia are concerned?"'[19] Soviet Russian officials and their foreign 'fellow travellers' for decades to come would repeat the contention that British intervention in the Caucasus had the aim of annexing parts of Russia and gaining access to its natural resources. In fact British policy in Russia was quite clear: ‘we have no intention of annexing any of these territories or converting any of them into a British protectorate, or of accepting any commitments which will involve the permanent maintenance of large British forces in the Caucasus’.[20] Even the British Empire's finances were not so inexhaustible after four years of war that the cost of its various anti-Bolshevik interventions could be disregarded. In the prevailing atmosphere of war-weariness only the most bellicose of its statesmen complained of the ‘complete absence of any definite or decided policy’ towards ‘the unfinished task’ – which meant: going to war against the Bolsheviks on the side of the Russian Whites,[21] thereby ignoring the no less important task of ensuring self-determination for the subject peoples of the Russian Empire.

Independent Georgia was not subjected to particularly harsh terms by the Turks, beyond the economic concessions already granted, and a plebiscite of the Muslim Achars, which ostensibly legitimized Turkey's annexation of Batumi. Any further Turkish intimidation of Georgia, with the aim of using it as a corridor to gain access to Baku oil and ‘Turanian’ Turkestan, was frustrated by Georgia's agreement with the Germans, whose troops tactfully fostered cordial relations. The Germans’ friendliness towards Georgia had the ulterior motive of tapping not only Baku oil but also Georgia's deposits of manganese, and Georgia's army was useful in guarding railways against interference by the Turks. Germany trusted Turkey as little as the Georgians did, and was willing to help independent Georgia – a potential foothold for influence in the Middle East – to obtain international recognition. After overcoming diplomatic objections in Berlin and Moscow, in October 1918 Germany signed a treaty recognizing Georgia as an independent state. This did not prevent the Bolshevik Terek Committee from fomenting uprisings in parts of Georgia, but it did make it remove from Tbilisi the committee it had maintained there. Economic measures introduced by the Georgian government included further land reform, liberal labour laws and nationalization of some industries, but the situation in the Caucasus during the three years of existence of independent Georgia was too chaotic to permit further innovation.[22]

Despite its own dependence on German favour, the Georgian government in the summer of 1918 behaved somewhat arrogantly towards its neighbours – particularly the Armenians, as Georgia occupied the Borchalo-Lori district on the Turkish frontier despite the fact that the majority of its population were Armenian.[23] This first conflict over borders between Transcaucasian countries distressed the Armenians greatly, and revealed chauvinist attitudes in the Georgian government which boded ill both for its neighbours and for other ethnic communities within it, such as the Osetians and Abkhaz. Another indication that Georgia intended to act 'as a classical example of an imperialist "small nation"' was the designation of Georgian as the only official language to be used in Georgia's parliament, administration, lawcourts and army, to the exclusion of Armenian, Russian and other languages of its multi-ethnic population. Another writer comments: 'Both in territory-snatching outside and bureaucratic tyranny inside, [Georgia's] chauvinism was beyond all bounds.'[24]

As we have seen, the Bolshevik advance down the Black Sea coast in July 1918 had led the Abkhaz National Council to seek Georgia's protection, and a treaty concluded between the two peoples made Abkhazia part of Georgia *temporarily*. However, the Abkhazians disliked Georgian rule, as their orientation was towards North Caucasus, in the election of whose parliament they intended to participate in November. The difficulties facing the Abkhaz and the remnants of the Circassian peoples in relations with their larger neighbours were illustrated when Russia's Volunteer Army drove the Reds out of the Black Sea region and came face to face with Georgian troops at Sukhumi. In heated talks between White Russian and Georgian representatives, at which the former claimed this territory as ‘Russian’ and demanded support from Georgia against the Bolsheviks, neither the Whites nor the Georgians considered the opinion of the indigenous Abkhazians. The question of honouring the ‘temporariness’ of the treaty subordinating Abkhazia to Georgia was evaded by all subsequent Georgian governments.[25]

From August 1918, as Turkey and Germany faced defeat in the world war, Georgian attitudes shifted. Even as German recognition of Georgia was granted and German troops prepared to move against Baku to secure the oil promised by Moscow, the Georgians started courting the Allies, with a view to the Peace Conference. At the same time Istanbul's Young Turk government fell, and its successor, led by Izzet Pasha, became more conciliatory, offering to relinquish territories which Turkey had gained in March. On the other hand, as soon as German troops began to leave Georgia the Bolshevik government sent its regional committee back to resume propaganda in Tbilisi.[26]

Armenia's reluctantly declared independence brought it no respite, since the desperate struggle for survival obliged its one-party Dashnaktsutyun government to make vocal protestations about territory. A problem which had removed itself temporarily was Moscow's creation, the Armenian Communist Party – whose connection with Armenia was very slight. Ensconced in Moscow, it joined in the Bolshevik vituperation against national separatism and Armenia's independence ‘granted by the Entente’. In fact, in its precarious situation Armenia, detached from Russia by force of circumstance, was a suppliant before those who now possessed influence in Transcaucasia – Germany and Soviet Russia. All that the Allies could do was give limited moral support to a country whose sufferings evoked widespread sympathy and, wherever possible, practical help.[27]

Unfortunately, squabbling between the newly independent South Caucasian states started very soon, much of the trouble being incited by the Young Turk dictatorship's skill in manipulating local antagonisms. In addition to Turkey's territorial gains by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in May 1918 the Treaty of Batumi had granted it a string of eight districts stretching from Akhaltsikhe in the west to Nakhchavan in the east. Of these districts, Akhalkalaki, Lori, Alexandropol, Echmiadzin and Yerevan had majorities of Armenians ranging from 97% in Alexandropol to 60% in Yerevan; in Akhaltsikhe Armenians and Georgians were 38% and 35% respectively; and Sharur-Daralagyaz and Nakhchavan had Azerbaijani majorities of 70% and 60% respectively.[28] The mainly Armenian district of Lori in Borchalo region became a bone of contention, since Georgia claimed it – ‘temporarily’ – in June 1918, and closed its borders to Akhalkalaki Armenians fleeing from the Turks. Until then the Georgians had respected the ‘ethnic principle’ in deciding which nationality a territory should belong to, but suddenly they rejected this, and pressed claims to certain areas (including Lori) on various grounds. The Mudros armistice brought further disillusionment to the Armenians, as the British admiral presiding yielded to Turkish requests for more favourable terms: instead of requiring Turkey to relinquish all of its conquests in Transcaucasia, the Allies at first allowed it to retain Kars and Ardahan, which belonged to the Armenians' pre-Seljuq homeland.[29]

Mutual suspicion and antagonism, based on ingrained national attitudes, led to war between Armenia and Georgia within six weeks of the end of the war with Turkey. In October 1918 Turkey withdrew its troops from the corridor they had occupied between districts of Tbilisi province claimed by the Georgians and those claimed by Armenia. Dro's Armenian troops quickly moved into Lori, but were prevented from further advance by Georgian and German forces. The Armenian government then proposed a conference to resolve their rival territorial claims, but Georgian politicians – while congratulating themselves on their devotion to peace – talked only about 'crushing disorder and anarchy', while asserting their right to whatever territory they claimed as essential to Georgia.[30]

After the armistice it was Georgia that took advantage of the Turkish evacuation and on 2 December 1918, ignoring previous agreements, sent troops to take over Akhalkalaki and forestall Armenian occupation. The Armenians, isolated in neighbouring Lori, where the Georgians had proved little less tyrannical than the Turks, were by then on the point of rebellion. To support them and their compatriots in Akhalkalaki, the Armenian army advanced into Lori on 14 December, and 11 days later were within 30 miles of Tbilisi, having encountered little opposition from the Georgians. The Allied military mission in Tbilisi imposed a ceasefire, drawn up in agreement with the Georgian government, but without any consultation with the Armenians, requiring the withdrawal of Armenian troops to their original positions. All the territory taken by the Armenians became a neutral zone occupied by British troops pending the settlement of border disputes at the Peace Conference.[31] A regrettable aspect of this war was the measures taken by the Georgians against Armenian citizens of Tbilisi (45% of its population) which had been shared by the two peoples for centuries. All Armenians in Tbilisi were declared to be prisoners of war, and many had their property confiscated. In their programme of racial discrimination the Georgians deprived all Armenian officials and workers of their posts, and forced them to register as Georgian citizens. Thus 'Tiflis…finally became a Georgian city ruled by Georgians'; but this draconian achievement made Allied representatives in the Caucasus 'question whether anything could be made of independence in Transcaucasia or whether independence would become another word for anarchy'.[32]

In late October 1918 the Georgian government had invited Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Mountain Republic to send delegates to a conference in Tbilisi to discuss ways of resolving peacefully any territorial disputes between them. The Armenians found the invitation unacceptable because its tone was imperious and it should not have included the Muslim Mountain Republic. The Armenians' rejection of Georgia's proposal to present joint submissions on common interests at the Peace Conference was also hard to understand. The Georgians perhaps lacked tact in issuing proposals from Tbilisi, the old seat of Russian imperial administration, but the Armenians were equally foolish in rejecting all co-operation – perhaps relying upon especially sympathetic treatment from the Allies because of their well-known sufferings, whereas Azerbaijan, the Mountain Republic and even Georgia were almost unknown to the Western public.[33] On the other hand, as all countries concerned prepared their depositions to the international

Peace Conference, Armenia's politicians presented an overambitious view of their historical territory '[extending] from the Caspian Sea and the Persian province of Azerbaijan in the east to Asia Minor in the west, and from the river Kura in the north to Kurdistan and Mesopotamia in the south'.[34] Although the time when Armenia had occupied this whole region was remote, and it had frequently been divided between other countries, its nationalist leaders framed extravagant claims to territories which – in particular Cilicia – had not belonged to an Armenian state for centuries. No doubt the assurance by the USA, France and Britain that the 'Armenian question' would be settled 'according to the supreme laws of humanity and justice'[35] encouraged Armenians to dream of Tigran II's 'Greater Armenia'.[36] Undoubtedly Armenia desperately needed more territory than the scrap of Yerevan province (some 3,217 square miles) which would be left to it if Georgia and Azerbaijan obtained all their territorial demands.[37] Armenia's most appalling problem in the winter of 1918–19 was half a million refugees, some 350,000 of whom were huddled into the small area held by Armenia. Armenia was so exhausted and destitute, threatened by hostile neighbours and dependent on the good will of the Allies that it could scarcely afford to make unrealistic demands.[38]

North Caucasus, June 1918 to July 1919

In North Caucasus too, the situation was complicated, as Russian Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik armies fought over the lands of the indigenous peoples from Circassia to Daghestan, and it has been said that 'nowhere in the Russian Empire was the Civil War so confused and so ferocious' as here.[39] The main centres of Bolshevik activity were, as always, the towns, with Vladikavkaz the key point controlling communications between east and west, and between Russia and South Caucasia, and it was to Vladikavkaz that Russia's Bolshevik ‘Transcaucasian’ Committee was shifted from Tbilisi in January 1918, when its situation became untenable in South Caucasus. Many conferences concerned with the whole of North Caucasus took place in Vladikavkaz or Pyatigorsk, and Yekaterinodar was the focus of most important political events in the west. The greater fragmentation of north-east Caucasus was reflected in the existence of several political centres: Groznyy for Chechenia, Temir-Khan Shura for Daghestan and Port Petrovsk for the communists of the Caspian coast, while the dispersed *stanitsa*s of the Terek Cossacks were linked with towns such as Mozdok and Kizlar. Despite Vladikavkaz's position at the centre of fighting and, for much of the time, as the Bolshevik headquarters in North Caucasus, in June 1918 it harboured a small British mission, which supported a short-lived Terek Cossack rebellion. This was defeated, but a British presence in the region was maintained until its capture by the Bolsheviks in November.[40]

In July the Bolsheviks attempted to consolidate their domination of North Caucasus by forming a single North Caucasian Soviet Republic embracing the Kuban, the Black Sea coast, and Stavropol and Terek regions. However, they were already threatened from the north, as Denikin's Volunteer Army had re-emerged from the Don steppes and moved into the Kuban in June. There was intense fighting for the next six months, as the Volunteer Army, receiving more support from the Kuban Cossacks than previously because of the Cossacks’ disillusionment with the Bolsheviks, advanced slowly, capturing Tikhoretskaya rail junction in mid July, and Yekaterinodar and Novorossiysk in August. While these campaigns gained the Volunteer Army a strong base in north-west Caucasus, the Red Army, ill equipped and demoralized, disintegrated. In August 1918 remnants of Red Guards and refugees who were stranded in the Taman peninsula moved from the Black Sea coast into Circassian territory near Maykop, where atrocities against the Adygeys paralleled those perpetrated in March. A Bolshevik commander wrote that his soldiers were so filled with hatred that they took almost no prisoners, venting their spite arbitrarily on Adygey villages, abusing and killing nearly all of the men and some women – more than 2,000 altogether. After this the 30,000-strong Taman horde moved to Armavir, where they massacred 1,340 people before fleeing to Stavropol province, where they were surrounded by the Whites and killed or imprisoned.[41]

The Whites too rampaged viciously. Shkuro's White partisans' occupation of Batalpashinskaya with its Circassian, Karachay and Nogay population in early September resulted in numerous raids on villages and executions. Just as the communists had attempted – on the whole unsuccessfully – to force Circassians, Abazas, Nogays and Karachays into cavalry detachments, so the Whites made the same non-Russian peoples form regiments which, however, quickly melted away.[42] On the whole the behaviour of Denikin's forces confirmed the ironic view that, 'In most of the areas occupied by the Volunteer Army the population suffered from its misrule. Pogroms, the gallows, the spurred boot – these were the symbols of the generals who have been called the "rallying-point for all that was noblest in old Russia".'[43]

It seems doubtful that 'The Volunteer Army and the Kuban Cossacks were mutually complementary':[44] in fact relations were neither simple nor harmonious. In addition to the regular army officers' haughty attitude towards Cossacks, there were significant ethnic differences: the Kuban Host was largely Ukrainian in origin and language and, while they were generally as anti-communist as the army officers, in the Rada they divided into the 'Black Sea men' (*Chernomortsy*) – a majority who demanded independence – and the minority 'Line men' (*lineytsy*), originally from the Terek, who took the imperial stance of a single, indivisible Russia. Thus violent clashes occurred in 1919 between the Rada and the Cossack commanders. Moreover, the Kuban Cossacks rejected White officers' interference in their affairs – feeling safe to do this because they formed almost 90% of the Volunteer Army. To someone as dictatorial as Denikin this was hard to tolerate. The Bolsheviks too were aware of the political divisions in the Cossack Hosts, and in autumn 1918, when Bolshevik fortunes in North Caucasus were at a low ebb, organized clandestine propaganda work among Cossacks and 'outsiders'.[45]

Along the Black Sea coast the situation of the Abkhazians was difficult, as the confrontation between the Georgian army and the Russians continued. To add to the confusion, Turks landed at Sukhumi in August 1918 and occupied it briefly, expelling Georgian officials and proclaiming the union of Abkhazia with the Mountain Republic. The following month the Georgians were forced out of Tuapse by the Reds, but the latter were closely pursued by the Volunteer Army, which then found itself facing the Georgians at Sochi and Sukhumi. Here the Abkhazians appealed to the Whites for support in gaining their freedom, not realizing how strong the latters' ethnic prejudices were. The Abkhazians' case became only one element in a complex of points disputed between the Whites (in their own estimation the legitimate rulers of the whole Russian Empire) and the Georgians. In the eyes of the Volunteer Army the Georgians were traitors because of their collaboration with the Germans, their ill-treatment of Russians residing in Georgia, their attempt to seize Sukhumi region, and their lack of support for the Whites in their fight against Bolshevism.[46]

In November, after the Turkish and German armistices, the Volunteer Army's situation improved as British and French ships arrived in Novorossiysk with supplies and weapons; they also brought personnel to establish British military missions in Yekaterinodar, Temir-Khan Shura and other places in North Caucasus, as well as Batumi and Tbilisi.[47] These British officers soon found themselves involved, against their will, in arbitration between the White Russians and the Georgians.

Meanwhile, on the Terek in June 1918 the Osetian Menshevik Giorgi Bicherakhov initiated an anti-Bolshevik campaign, including a daring raid on Vladikavkaz by a combined force of Cossacks and Osetians on 5 August, aiming to annihilate the Bolshevik leaders attending a Terek Peoples' Congress. The street-fighting, involving Ingush, Osetians and Georgians on the Bolshevik side, lasted 11 days, and the Bolsheviks regained control of the town.[48]

Thereafter the Bolsheviks, aided by Ingush, wreaked vengeance on Cossack settlements at Mozdok and Sunzha, during which the Ingush had the satisfaction of evicting Cossack families occupying their homes in Ingush territory. A Bolshevik account of these events illustrates the relations prevailing between the Terek Cossacks and native peoples: as the Soviet flag was raised above Mozdok fort by an Ingush, his people for the first time had a sense of receiving just treatment; they would no longer be obliged to stand aside whenever they met a Cossack, or accept 'bloody bonehead' as a form of address.[49]

On the same date as the Vladikavkaz raid, White Cossacks advanced into Chechenia, where Bolsheviks in Groznyy withstood a siege for 100 days, and those in Kizlar faced a similar onslaught. Thus the Bolsheviks' fortunes in North Caucasus had fallen very low by October 1918, but they then rallied, and in November in the Mozdok steppe, Orjonikidze's Red troops defeated the Cossacks, many of whom fled to Daghestan. The Bolsheviks regained Mozdok, Vladikavkaz, Pyatigorsk and Kabarda, but 'succeeded in entrenching themselves in only a few towns…Cossack settlements and…Russian villages; the areas with a North Caucasian population remained in the hands of the local people's soviets, which obeyed the…Union of Mountain Peoples'.[50] In October, for instance, the Ingush National Council under Colonel Kerim Goygov threw off Bolshevik control[51] – no doubt exchanging it for the equally oppressive yoke of the Volunteer Army.

Further Bolshevik attempts to regain authority included an abortive Congress of Peoples of the Terek in Vladikavkaz in November, at which the first mountain peoples' Communist Group was created. When Denikin's advance from Yekaterinodar disrupted this congress, Orjonikidze moved to Pyatigorsk, created a 'Defence Council of North Caucasus'[52] and exhorted the native peoples, with typically extravagant rhetoric: 'To arms, every man! In disciplined units, in dashing cavalry regiments let us throw ourselves against Denikin's officer bandits to defend the sacred liberty of our peoples and our Soviet power. Hey, free highlanders! To horse! The enemy is at the gate!' In Moscow the People's Commissariat for Nationalities reported a massive response by Ingush, Chechens, Osetians, Kabardans and others, claiming that 4,000 Kabardans and 1,500 Balkars joined up at this time. Inspired by this bravado, the ill-supplied Red Army of North

Caucasus launched an offensive on 1 January 1919 which took them only 35 miles towards Batalpashinsk before Shkuro's White Cossacks drove them back to Pyatigorsk, and this foray precipitated a lightning advance of the Volunteer Army from Yekaterinodar, which took Pyatigorsk and neighbouring towns on 20 January.[53]

In February, when Shkuro advanced from the Kuban into the Terek Republic, Ingush border guards fought hard to prevent the Cossacks from trespassing further on to their territory. Thereafter Vladikavkaz once again became a battlefield, with machineguns and artillery in the streets, and after the Whites took the city they punished the Ingush by pillaging their villages. Further demands were made by Kabardans, Ingush and Osetians for the formation of ethnic regiments to augment the anti-Bolshevik army – and these conflicts were complicated by yet another ethnic–religious distinction, as Osetian Digor Muslims sided with the Bolsheviks and Ingush against the Cossacks, while Christian Osetians joined the Cossacks.[54]

February 1919 saw the Bolsheviks' North Caucasus army annihilated and its remnants pursued eastwards through Chechenia, while more than 50,000 prisoners were taken by the Whites. By March the latter had subjugated Kabarda, Osetia and Ingushia, and occupied the main towns, including Vladikavkaz. Farther east, even after the Bolsheviks abandoned Groznyy resistance was continued with the help of pro-communist Chechens and forces of the North Caucasus government. However, as the Whites brought thirteen infantry battalions, forty-nine cavalry squadrons and some British aircraft against them, the Reds were driven back. Some Red Army survivors, including N. F. Gikalo, one of the chief Bolshevik activists in North Caucasus, and

Arslanbek Sheripov, ‘the first Chechen communist’, fled to Daghestan, where they helped to establish a Bolshevik underground organization which subsequently played a part in the reimposition of Soviet power.[55]

It was on the invitation of the Mountain Republic government that Turkey, ignoring German orders, began direct intervention in North Caucasus in June 1918. As Circassia was generally closed to them by the overwhelming Russian presence there, the Turks sent military advisers, mainly of North Caucasian *muhajir* origin, by way of Azerbaijan to Daghestan. Led by Isma^{c}il Hakki-bey and Isma^{c}il Berkuk, they established contact with districts free from Bolshevik control and organized military units. Azerbaijan too sought to strengthen the Islamic alliance by proposing union with Daghestan. Thus encouraged, the Daghestan Shari^{c}ah Army attacked Temir-Khan Shura on 24 July, just as a Congress of Soviets organized by Korkmasov and Dakhadayev was opening there, and the Bolsheviks surrendered when news arrived of the anti-communist coup in Baku. This event brought another element into Daghestan – L. Bicherakhov's Cossacks, fresh from fighting against Nuri Pasha's Army of Islam in Azerbaijan, and therefore highly unwelcome to Uzun Hajji and his fanatically anti-Russian supporters, the Dargos and Avars.[56] Bicherakhov, facing both the remnants of the Bolsheviks and the Daghestani Shari^{c}ah Army with its Turkish supporters, fought his way north towards his brother's Cossack force on the Terek, taking Darband temporarily and occupying Petrovsk on 2 September in the name of the Samara ‘Komuch’ government.[57] The Mountain Government, with the Turks’ approval, now obtained Bicherakhov's help against the Bolsheviks, and Prince Nuhbek Tarkovskiy, a descendant of the *shamkhal*s of Tarku, was installed in Temir-Khan Shura as military dictator of Daghestan. (It was during the Bolsheviks’ flight from there that one of the most active indigenous communists, Makhach Dakhadayev, was killed by Turkish troops; in 1922 Port Petrovsk was renamed Makhachkala, ‘Makhach-town’, in his honour.)[58]

Although the Mountain Government accepted Bicherakhov, Nuri Pasha sent a Turkish division under the Circassian general Yusuf Izzet from Baku, ostensibly to support the Daghestan Shari^{c}ah Army against him. The Turks quickly occupied Darband and in October captured Petrovsk, forcing Bicherakhov to retreat to Anzali. Further integration between the Mountain Government and Azerbaijan by a treaty creating a joint war ministry subordinated to Turkish command was suggested, with the costs of maintaining the Turks in Daghestan falling on Daghestan and Azerbaijan. However, this, plus Azerbaijan's loans to Daghestan against grain supplies, placed Daghestan under severe financial strain, and in general the ambiguities underlying Daghestan's supposed alliances ruled out real collaboration. The Daghestani dictator Tarkovskiy and Bicherakhov were pursuing quite different ends, and their pact went no farther than an undertaking not to fight each other. Tarkovskiy's attempts to recruit and equip a Daghestan army were frustrated by the Turks, the Shari^{c}ah Army and Bicherakhov, while influential clan chiefs sabotaged his efforts to organize elections by whispering that he was encouraging Denikin to resubjugate Daghestan. In fact, a week before the Mudros armistice ended the Turks’ presence in North Caucasus (October 1918) they occupied Temir-Khan Shura and expelled Tarkovskiy, while the Mountain Government moved back from Tbilisi to Daghestan. As in South Caucasus, the Turkish army as it withdrew from Daghestan planted a number of officers to maintain Turkish influence.[59]

In November 1918 the Mountain Government attempted to hold elections for all the indigenous peoples of North Caucasus, including not only the Kabardans, Osetians, Ingush, Chechens and peoples of Daghestan, but also the Abkhaz and Circassians (who were prevented by Denikin's hold on the Kuban), and the Avars and Tsakhurs of Zakatala district of Azerbaijan. However, because of the turbulent situation, the resulting Constituent Congress of North Caucasus consisted almost entirely of Daghestanis, who nevertheless instituted a Union Council and elected the Kabardan Pshemakho Kotsev as its president, and the legitimacy of the Mountain Republic government was recognized in Tbilisi. Like other countries, the Mountain Republic at this time was concerned with obtaining Allied recognition of its credentials as an independent state, but this encountered a strong bias against countries which in the eyes of the European powers were both small and ‘new’. The Mountain Republic's emissary to Paris, Heydar Bammat, got no farther than Switzerland, and received as little satisfaction as the Georgians and Azerbaijanis. France, doggedly supporting the restoration of the undivided Russian Empire, was particularly hostile towards ‘new nations’, and as a result no mission whatsoever from North Caucasus was accepted at the Peace Conference. A delegation to General Thomson received the advice that all questions of independence would be decided at the Peace Conference, and that the Mountain Republic should provide support for Denikin by forming a coalition with the Terek Cossacks (many of whom were still in Daghestan as refugees from the Bolsheviks). As Thomson assured them that his mission was to help the peoples of the Caucasus, the Mountain Government not only formed a new cabinet including Terek Cossack representatives, but in December 1918, as a contribution to the fight against Bolshevism, also placed its forces at the disposal of the British command – while tacitly keeping open the option of going over to the Bolsheviks as a last resort if the UMP's independence was not recognized.[60] Indeed, their co-operation gained no credit from Denikin who, having expelled the Bolsheviks from North Caucasus, ‘set about reinstating the old system and destroying the achievements of the February Revolution’.[61]

Two of Denikin's actions in particular demonstrate his inborn disdain for non-Russian peoples. Firstly, he broke the mutual pact made in Novocherkassk in July 1918 between the Volunteer Army and the North Caucasian government by turning aside from pursuit of the Red Army to raid the mountain peoples’ territory. Secondly, in February 1919, in conformity with his domineering character, demanding unquestioning submission to the will of the Russian state, Denikin appointed as commander-in-chief of Terek–Daghestan region General Lyakhov, ‘an energetic officer known for his rather violent character’[62] and notorious for his savage punitive measures against the Laz and Achars in 1915. In fact, the Volunteer Army commanders declared that no such entity as the Mountain Government existed.[63]

The Mountain Government protested that Lyakhov's appointment flouted self-determination, and resolved to mobilize its troops to defend its existence. Once again the British command advised Denikin against using force, thereby incurring the French government's accusation of intervening in a way which favoured the disintegration of ‘Russia’ – i.e. Russia's colonial empire. Denikin again displayed his contempt for non-Russian peoples in May when, after feigning readiness to negotiate, he suddenly attacked and occupied Petrovsk on 20 May 1919. Thus North Caucasus was temporarily relieved from Bolshevik control – apart from the conspiratorial activity inseparable from Lenin's party, which continued its infiltration through Astrakhan and Baku. Denikin for his part proceeded to put into action his planned invasion of Daghestan (British collusion in which was no longer concealed). Darband was occupied, and Volunteer Army detachments were sent to impose White Russian rule over the mountain villages. An emergency meeting of Daghestani deputies to deal with this situation became the last session of the Mountain Parliament. When its members rejected the Najmuddin leadership's proposal to leave the formation of a new government to General Khalilov (the former North Caucasus war minister, who had defected to Denikin) the session was prorogued and most national activists, including Kotsev, Bammat and Tsalykatty, fled to Baku or Tbilisi.[64]

Meanwhile in Abkhazia the stand-off between the Volunteer Army and Georgia continued. In April 1919 the Georgians defied the Whites by breaking through the British neutral zone and advancing to the river Mekhadyr, and Denikin responded by imposing a blockade on supply routes to Georgia. The British generals now urged Georgia to yield Abkhazia to the Whites, but Zhordania refused to withdraw Georgia's troops and matched Denikin's measures by blockading supplies from Batumi, causing stalemate on the Black Sea coast.[65]

South Caucasus, November 1918 to early 1920

For the new Caucasian republics 1919 brought direct experience of high-level international diplomacy, as they sent their delegations to lobby the European powers at the

Paris Peace Conference. Never before had the Caucasus been subjected to the scrutiny of so many statesmen, officials and generals of so many countries of Europe and the USA – few of whom could have had much knowledge about these subject peoples of the Russian Empire, about whom nevertheless many expressed sweeping, and frequently prejudiced, opinions at meetings or in correspondence with the Allied Supreme War Council, the Paris Peace Conference, the United Kingdom/Imperial War Cabinet, and in documents, secret at the time, held in British military intelligence, Foreign Office, and India Office records.

Like other newly created or revived countries, the Caucasians first had to obtain recognition of their delegations – which depended on the sympathy or prejudice of the generals and politicians of the victorious Allies towards US president Wilson's principle of self-determination. Thereafter each would put its case for recognition as one of the independent states which would compose the League of Nations. Two outside forces could influence the outcome for the Caucasian republics: Russia – whether the White Army leaders, who assumed the prerogative in deciding the empire's future, or the Bolsheviks, who assumed no less, but spurned the conventions of 'bourgeois' diplomacy; and Turkey – which, despite being one of the 'guilty' nations, evaded most penalties for its war-time actions, and became self-assertive itself as a nation-state under Mustafa Kemal.

Each of the Caucasian republics needed to make a favourable impression at the Peace Conference. Georgia, after Turkish and German occupation ended, had achieved some peaceful construction: elections were held in February 1919 for a Constitutional Assembly, which was convened in March. Economically, however, it was not self-sufficient, having to rely on the favour of the Volunteer Army for some foodstuffs.[66] As the Peace Conference approached, Georgia's request to Thomson for recognition as an independent state was rebuffed as being inconsistent with the restoration of Russian authority, and its Menshevik–socialist régime was unpalatable to the British government. Georgian pride was offended by the British occupation of Batumi, which had 'become a centre of agitation and corruption, where…Turkish nationalists and…Bolsheviks…[were] able to fraternize without danger',[67] and where numerous assassinations ocurred, including that of General Lyakhov in 1920. The Georgians also objected to British occupation of Tbilisi where, despite assurances that they would not interfere in internal affairs, their censorship of the press, misbehaviour by British troops, and rumours of sinister intentions made the British more unpopular than their German predecessors. British commanders were, however, conscientious in keeping the peace and preserving existing administration and borders, pending decisions of the Peace Conference.[68]

The immediate problem for Georgia was Denikin's army on the Black Sea coast. Although in December 1918 an Abkhazian Congress had resolved to remain under Georgian rule temporarily, pending the establishment of a democratic Russia, White troops advanced south into Abkhazia, and the Georgians fell back on Sochi. The British mission in Tbilisi refused to meet Denikin's emissary, while a Georgian protest evoked from the Whites only the assertion that Georgia's annexation of Sochi was 'an outrage to Russia's dignity and interests', and that the Abkhazians complained of oppression by the Georgians. Disagreement also arose between Denikin and Thomson over the British decision to restrain the White Russians' belligerence by fixing a demarcation line from the river Bzyb, south of Sochi, along the main Caucasus watershed to Petrovsk on the Caspian, beyond which Denikin was forbidden to advance into either Georgia or Daghestan. When Thomson reluctantly agreed in January 1919 to the Abkhazians' request for British troops to establish a neutral buffer zone, he was reproached by Georgia's prime minister Zhordania for his naivety in trusting the Russians.[69] Thereafter Britain declared Georgia's territory inviolable, and sent troops to Sochi as a buffer. This was interpreted by Georgia as a guarantee that the Whites would not be allowed to occupy Sochi, but Denikin thought otherwise. A long wrangle developed, and in April Georgian troops broke through the British neutral zone – whereupon the Whites declared a blockade of Georgia. Zhordania asked the British mission to persuade Denikin to be more co-operative, but in fact it urged Georgia to decide in the Whites' favour. One British colonel believed that, although Georgia and Armenia were determined to be separate from Russia, it would be preferable to have them join 'a regenerated Russia'; it certainly was 'not worth our while to make a permanent enemy of Russia, in order to bolster up the independence of such a corrupt and degenerate race as the Georgians',[70] whose government they deemed to be practically Bolshevik. Meanwhile, Denikin initiated talks with Georgia and secret contacts with Russian residents, with the aim of achieving 'a painless reunion' of 'Transcaucasia' with Russia, of which (in characteristically Russian-nationalist terms), he said, it was 'an inalienable part'.[71] Thus, despite all the changes that had occurred in the Russian Empire since 1917, Denikin remained obsessed with the imperialist view of 'Russia one and indivisible', clinging to a past in which all the indigenous peoples of the empire were simply 'pacified tribes', destined to serve the Russian people.

However, Georgia too behaved like a petty imperialist power by bullying the non-Russian peoples within its borders. In 1918 an uprising of Georgian and Osetian peasants in the north of Tbilisi province had been harshly suppressed, and its Bolshevik-dominated Osetian National Council outlawed – making southern Osetia even more receptive to Bolshevik propaganda. Farther west, the indigenous Abkhazians also rebelled in January 1919 against oppression by Georgian officials occupying their land.[72]

In December 1918, pending the Peace Conference, Georgia received some encouragement from the British Foreign Office, which generally favoured the Georgians rather than the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. However, Britain's most influential politician during and after 1918, Lord Curzon, displayed much shallow prejudice, not only against Muslims. He believed that, in order to impose British control over the Caucasus (!), the independence of the Georgians and Armenians (‘that singularly unattractive people’) should be encouraged, but not that of Azerbaijan or ‘the wild little Moslem state of Daghestan’.[73] Nevertheless, when the Georgian delegation arrived in Europe it received a cool reception because of its socialist leanings and unavoidable war-time collaboration with the Germans. There were many discussions in London of the Georgian and Caucasian problem, but it was not until November 1919, when Denikin's campaign was crumbling, that the Allied Supreme Council entertained the possibility of supporting the ‘Transcaucasian’ states as a barrier to communist expansion in the Middle East. Accordingly, in January 1920, after withholding official recognition for a year, it suddenly extended recognition to Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. (Next month even Denikin followed suit, issuing a pompous statement acknowledging the existence of the ‘borderland’ states which he had so long sought to destroy.) Although international recognition was in itself gratifying to the republics, they were not too impressed, since the Allies clearly continued to see South Caucasus (still called by Russians ‘Transcaucasia’) as ‘part of Russia’. On the other hand, the Peace Conference found reason to doubt the political maturity of the Caucasian countries when a fierce squabble over Batumi began between Armenia and Georgia.[74]

Persia and the two Azerbaijans

Caucasian oil had been accessible to Russia since its conquest of ‘Transcaucasia’ at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and was coveted by various foreign powers, especially as Russian technology was inadequate to exploit the oil wells without foreign assistance. By the end of the century newly discovered oilfields in Iraq attracted both the German and the British governments, and fear of German naval modernization – making it essential for the Royal Navy to replace coal-fired with swifter oil-fired ships – led to British government investment in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company just before the outbreak of the First World War. As future events in the Caucasus had great significance in Europe, a British force was sent to Mesopotamia in 1914 to forestall the Germans and link up with Russian forces in Persia; in 1917 it occupied Baghdad, and eventually amounted to 600,000 British troops. Eventually this army intervened directly in the Caucasus, where their role of representing Allied authority as caretakers for the White Russians proved a formidable task.[75]

The first revolution in the Russian Empire, which occurred in 1905 and resulted in some grudging concessions to democracy by Tsar Nicholas II, had many repercussions within Russia's borders and beyond. Although in Persia no revolutionary events occurred after St Petersburg's Bloody

Sunday and the subsequent general strike in Russia, these events ‘provided the Persians with an example that encouraged them to initiate their own reforms’.[76] Iran entered a period of turmoil involving political restructuring and internal power struggles, as the last two shahs of the Qajar dynasty made their unimpressive exit. Under Muzaffar ad-Din Shah his chief adviser, Amin as-Sultan, favoured Russia and arranged many loans from and concessions to it which greatly increased Russia's hold over Iran. As the income which Iran gained from these transactions was not used productively, but ‘went largely for the three extravagantly expensive trips to Europe which the shah and his entourage took between 1900 and 1902’, clandestine opposition to the shah grew and riots occurred. As a result, Muzaffar dismissed Amin as-Sultan and in 1906 yielded to the democratic innovation of an elected parliament, the Majlis. In January 1907, however, Muzaffar died, and his successor, Muhammad-ᶜAli Shah, ignoring the Majlis, recalled Amin as-Sultan and instituted a ‘cruel and autocratic’ régime. Meanwhile the Majlis decreed freedom of the press and public assembly; city councils were elected, and revolutionary societies appeared. After several political assassinations, including that of Amin as-Sultan, and an unsuccessful attempt to kill the shah, he himself organized a coup by Iran's Cossack Brigade.[77] This culminated in June 1908 when the shah, exasperated by the activities of political councils (modelled on Russia's workers’ councils), ordered his artillery to shell the Majlis building. The country's parliament was thus disrupted and, as the shah consolidated his position, many political activists were imprisoned or executed, while others moved east to join the revolutionaries as they advanced on Tehran. Legitimate government was not reinstated until, after 13 months of civil war, Muhammad ᶜAli was deposed and fled to asylum with the Russians, while his 12-year-old son Ahmad became shah, and the Second Majlis was elected in 1909.[78] This parliament too lasted only two and a half years, being dissolved in 1911 during a power struggle between American and Russian finance interests, in which the tribal Bakhtiyari leaders in the Majlis played a decisive part. It was a pro-German faction, challenging British and Russian activities in southern Iran, that brought this Third Majlis to an end in 1915, but their intrigues were thwarted by Sir Percy Sykes's recruitment of Bakhtiyari and Arab tribes to form the South Persian Rifles force.[79]

It was during these years of turmoil, in which a special part was played by Persian Azerbaijan, that the citizens of its lively capital Tabriz, in defiance of the shah's authority, became prominent in fighting for the cause of democracy, trade unionism and constitutional government. The Tabrizis 'were pioneers in establishing their own councils…months before [Iran's] Supplementary [Constitutional] Code was ratified' and the 'Constitutional Revolution' of 1905–9 began in earnest. From then onwards, Tabriz–Azerbaijan 'was seen by many Iranians as the centre from which any future progressive political change would originate'.[80]

The two Azerbaijans,[81] sharing the same Turkish language and a border on the Araxes, were not completely isolated from each other at this time, and were well aware of events in both Persia and Russia – particularly the latter's communist coup d'état in October 1917. As the White Russian army disintegrated, leaving Baku vulnerable to Turkish occupation and German influence, a small British contingent from Baghdad under General Dunsterville, including Cossacks led by L. Bicherakhov, advanced through north-western Persia and in February 1918 reached Anzali on the Caspian coast. There they took ship for Baku, where they stayed for a month but achieved little because of the chaotic situation.

The account of this expedition written by Dunsterville provides an insight into the situation in a corner of the collapsing Russian Empire where the native Azerbaijani middle-class democrats, the Russian communists and the British army were all striving to carry through mutually contradictory policies.[82]

Meanwhile in Tabriz the most serious of the rebel leaders, Sheykh Muhammad Khiyabani, combined politics with his regular commitments as a mathematics teacher and the imam of two mosques, and became an elected deputy of the Second Majlis from 1909. In 1918 Khiyabani, because of his Russian communist orientation, re-established the Democratic Party of Iran, which soon won wide support, and his revolution began with the election campaign for the Fourth Majlis in 1919, combining reaction against the Iranian government's collaboration with the Turks, with commitment to radical policies for Iran as a whole, and local autonomy for Tabriz–Azerbaijan as an integral part of Persia. To reassert this loyalist principle, in 1920 when 'Russian' Baku–Azerbaijan was proclaimed 'the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic', Khiyabani and his Tabrizi compatriots dissociated themselves from it by changing the name of their province from Azerbaijan to 'Azadistan' (Freedom Land).[83]

No less aware than Tabriz of contemporary political developments, and always susceptible to rebellion against Tehran, were the neighbouring districts of Gilan, Mazandaran and Gurgan, lying between the Elburz mountains and the Caspian Sea. Gilan was the scene of one of the 'popular reformist, secessionist, and revolutionary movements [which] began throughout Iran' at the time. Here in 1917 Mirza Kuchek Khan emerged as the leader of a movement which 'embodied, along with a Robin Hood-style reputation for robbing the rich and giving to the poor, the nationalist and revolutionary ideals of the constitutional period, vigorously pursued in a rebellion which the central government long proved incapable of suppressing'. According to one (rather biased) source, Kuchek Khan, previously the servant of a rich general, in 1909 led 100 men in a march on Tehran, then returned to Gilan, 'where he took up the profitable pursuit of seizing wealthy Persians and holding them to ransom, [until] he founded a brotherhood, "the Union of Islam", [whose] members…swore to drive all foreign aggressors from the sacred soil of Persia, and not to shave their heads or trim their beards until this task was accomplished'.[84] As their field of operations was the region of dense forest fringing the mountain range they were nicknamed *Jangali*s – 'Jungle men'.[85]

According to another version, Kuchek Khan was 'A Shīᶜite Muslim and an unyielding patriot…an indefatigable fighter and an incorruptible leader whose sole ambition was to rid the country of foreign domination and domestic administrative corruption.'[86] These virtues, however, could not avert intervention from the north: the Gilan rebels, hitherto hard-pressed by British and White Russian forces, rallied early in 1920 thanks to the landing of Bolshevik troops at Anzali. This base facilitated the spread of Soviet Russian propaganda, and in June even Kuchek Khan and his *Jangali*s associated themselves with the communist cause (without particular enthusiasm) by proclaiming their small breakaway realm the 'Socialist Soviet Republic of Iran' (!) under the rule of Mir Jafar Pishevari as commissar for internal affairs – i.e. secret police chief.[87]

Greater decisiveness in Iranian politics came in July 1920 when Shah Ahmad appointed a new prime minister, Mushir ad-Daulah, who, after sending the Persian Cossack Brigade to suppress the ‘Free Land’ movement in Tabriz,[88] declared that he would not submit the Anglo-Iranian Agreement to the Majlis until all British troops left Iran. A new Russian proposal for a treaty, on the other hand, was framed so skilfully that it was considered very favourable to Iran. At this point Persia's new prime minister, Fatḥ-Allah Khan, wisely announced that ratification of the Russian treaty would likewise be conditional upon the withdrawal of all Russian troops. In fact this was what happened with the Russian Agreement in April 1921, but by then the political situation had been changed radically by a coup d’état (not without the collusion of the British) which placed upon the Persian throne the commander of the Iranian Cossack Brigade, Colonel Reẓa^{c} Khan, who was crowned as the first shah of the Pahlavi dynasty in February 1921.

Until 1917 the British, along with the Russians, had wielded the greatest influence in Persia, but when the Russians withdrew after the Bolshevik revolution, and Germany was defeated on the Western front, only British advisers were left representing any foreign power. Their recommendations were not always wise, so that, for example, Iran's delegation at the all-important Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919 ‘was, under pressure from the British, ignominiously denied a hearing’.[89] No doubt the reason for this was Curzon's grandiose dream of creating for Britain a continuous chain of imperial communication and petroleum and other supplies, in protectorates stretching from Syria and Egypt across Iraq, Iran and Baluchistan to India and the colonies of Eastern Asia.[90] Meanwhile, a new Anglo-Iranian Agreement awaited ratification by the Iranian Majlis once elections were held. Although the British ‘advisers’ assumed that this would be a matter of form and, apparently having a free hand in Iran after the defeat of Germany, proceeded with their innovations in Persia's army, administration and communications, in fact publication of the agreement in August 1919 evoked great public protest not only from Persian citizens, but also from foreign governments, so that it was suspended and finally annulled in 1921.

The Baku–Azerbaijanis' début at the Paris Peace Conference was much belated, as their delegation, led by the esteemed liberal politician and lawyer ^{c}Ali Mardan Topchybashy, was detained in Istanbul for three months before the French government granted them entry visas. Further offence awaited them in Paris, where President Wilson snubbed the Azerbaijanis with the pronouncement that the conference 'did not want to partition the world into small pieces' – displaying the same bias in favour of 'great powers', and disdain for small nations, which prevailed among many of the arbiters shaping the future Europe – particularly in the case of the Russian Empire, which was (and still is) all too readily equated with the single name 'Russia'. Wilson's facile advice that the south Caucasian peoples should band together in a confederation showed complete incomprehension of the relations actually existing between Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Georgians and others. As Wilson repeated the stock phrase that 'the question of Azerbaijan's future could not be resolved until the "Russian question" in general had been settled', neither Azerbaijan nor its neighbours received recognition.[91]

One of newly independent Baku–Azerbaijan's claims to acceptability as a viable modern state was its parliamentary system based on voting rights for all citizens, including, for the first time anywhere, Muslim women. Despite the Baku Russians' attempts to discredit the Azerbaijanis, General

Thomson's expression of support for their government as ‘the only legal local power’ raised the northern Azerbaijanis’ hopes of success in Paris. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan after 1918 has been called ‘a typical example of a postcolonial country ill-prepared for the trials of independent existence’[92] – in which it differed little from its neighbours, Armenia and Georgia. Although Azerbaijan had suffered less from the direct effects of war, its economic and social situation was too unstable to permit it to tackle such problems as land reform, so that in May 1919 rebellious peasants looted landowners’ estates in Ganja district. Potentially, Baku–Azerbaijan had access to great wealth from oil (it almost concluded a deal with an American company, but was forced by British pressure to cancel it), while Prime Minister Khoyskiy yielded to corruption over an oil sale in March 1920, and was obliged to resign.[93] The British military mission, briefly acting as rulers in Baku, received orders regularly from London, but found themselves having to improvise policies and take decisions on their own initiative about such matters as the management of local banks, or setting up a Labour Control Office – then demonstrating their antipathy towards ‘organized labour’ by imprisoning the leaders of a strike for higher wages and shorter hours. So far as Baku–Azerbaijan's political future was concerned, the British did not disguise their official view that the Caucasus was part of Russia. However, they showed no favouritism towards the White Russian army or the Russians in Baku: Thomson, approached in November 1918 by the local Russian Council, silenced them with the fact that at that time Russia as a state did not exist.[94] The withdrawal of the British force in August, leaving behind only a few military advisers, was regretted by the Azerbaijani government, since Britain had been their country's only outside support. Baku's approaches to Persia concerning frontiers and trade, however, evoked interest in Tehran, as did the suggestion of a union between Caucasian or northern Azerbaijan (referred to in Persia as ‘Albania’) and the original (‘southern’) Azerbaijan with Tabriz as its historical centre.[95]

London's demarcation line between the zones of Allied and Volunteer Army control which General Thomson had laid down in January 1919 became a matter of great importance to the Caucasian republics. Baku–Azerbaijan, Georgia and Daghestan took this as an assurance that Denikin would not be allowed to invade their countries, and when Denikin disregarded this and pushed into coastal Daghestan in May, Winston Churchill reinforced previous official statements by advising him to withdraw. On 11 June, however, Thomson redrew the line to acknowledge the Whites’ occupation of Petrovsk, but excluded them from the Darband coast and the mountains. Seeing this as a threat to Azerbaijan, Khoyskiy protested to Thomson (as did the Mountain Republic) and called upon Azerbaijanis to rally to the defence of Daghestan. Denikin, however, overconfident after his successful drive into Ukraine in July, took Daghestan's resistance (particularly the involvement of Turkish troops) as a provocation, and ordered the Volunteer Army to invade the heart of the country. Accommodatingly, the British once more moved the demarcation line right up to the borders of Azerbaijan and Georgia, thus bringing the threat of Russian invasion to their doorstep.[96]

The White Russians’ malice towards Turkic Baku was not limited to threats; the discovery of an arms cache there showed that they had agents in Azerbaijan conspiring to overthrow the government. In view of various threats to their independence, therefore, Azerbaijan and Georgia in June 1919 concluded a mutual defence agreement, in case of attack by either White or Red Russians. In addition, for the first time an attempt was made to achieve solidarity among former subject peoples of the Russian Empire, when Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Mountain Republic joined with the newly founded Baltic states in protesting to the Allies about Denikin's aggressive moves. The temerity of the Caucasian republics in defying Russia's ‘state interests’ by forming a united front was punished by the Whites imposing an economic blockade in November 1919 – a futile gesture when the Whites were retreating on all fronts![97]

Armenia and the Ottoman and Azerbaijani Turkish problem

In November 1918 General Thomson had stated that one of the British mission's aims was to help the Armenians return to their homes, but even after the withdrawal of the Turkish army there were difficulties arising from the conflicts over territory between Armenia on the one hand and Georgia or Azerbaijan on the other, and the supposed problem of establishing the true facts and avoiding favouritism towards one or other side. The conflict over Borchalo in December was a case in point, but despite complexities and inevitable mistakes, a historian of the Caucasus believes that ‘It was Britain who prevented the spread of the conflagration to the entire Caucasus.’ He also mentions the fiction immediately generated in Moscow's communist newspapers, that it was Britain that provoked the war on the principle of ‘divide and conquer’.[98] Indeed it became one of the standard incantations of Soviet Russian historians to blame the British as much as Denikin, the Turks or the Germans for the turmoil in the Caucasus.

A great deal of harm was done to the cause of South Caucasian independence by the mutual truculence between

Georgia and Armenia, which played into their enemies' hands. An example of Armenian blindness to the need for co-operation with neighbours was their refusal to adopt an Azerbaijani–Georgian defence treaty in June 1919. The Armenians had become so suspicious of everyone else that they also disrupted an attempt by the Socialist International to arbitrate between them and Georgia – thus strengthening the hand of those who maintained that the Caucasian peoples were inherently incapable of governing themselves.[99] This view was unjust, considering that these countries had enjoyed at most three years of restored independence, during which they faced the constant threat of war and annihilation by Turks, White Russians and Bolshevik Russians – which scarcely facilitated the development of modern state institutions.

Another factor that increased the Armenians' isolation in Transcaucasia was their faith in Russia, even in the form of Denikin's imperialist Volunteer Army. Thus in December 1918, when Thomson ordered the Armenians occupying Lori to withdraw, leaving to Georgia the territory they had taken, Denikin thought that Thomson sided with the Georgians because the latter had told him the Armenians were in league with Denikin. Indeed, ammunition sent by Denikin to Armenia six months later as a reward for their loyalty was followed in autumn 1919 by an exchange of military representatives between the Volunteer Army and Armenia. The Armenians' tendency toward disunity was underlined even by their representation at the Peace Conference, since they had not one delegation, but two. One, from 'Russian' Armenia, was led by the Dashnaktsutyun nationalist Avetis Aharonyan; the other, the 'National delegation' recognized by the Allies, represented their worldwide diaspora and the Armenians of Turkey, and was led by the Armenian magnate Boghos Nubar Pasha, a former minister of state in Ottoman

Egypt. The two delegations were at daggers drawn, even if they both put forward approximately the same exaggerated territorial demands for the future Armenian state.[100]

After the 1918 Turkish armistice Armenia was in unremitting conflict with Baku–Azerbaijan over possession of Nakhchavan, Karabagh, Zangezur and adjacent areas lying to the south and east of Lake Sevan, which had formed part of the Russian Empire's Yerevan and Yelizavetpol (Ganja) provinces. Armenia's Gandzasar or Artsakh (to Azerbaijanis ‘Karabagh’) was more extensive than the small ‘autonomous’ province which under the USSR came to be known as ‘Highland (or Mountainous) Karabagh’.[101] The natural environment here consists of semi-desert and scrub rising north-eastwards from the Araxes valley, through grass steppe and deciduous woodland to high alpine meadows in Zangezur and Karabagh, providing good summer pasture for livestock.[102] To Armenians, it is obvious that Karabagh and Nakhchavan are ‘historically Armenian territory’,[103] although centuries of Turkish depredations have obscured their status. When the Transcaucasian Seim was established in January 1918, Karabagh became an autonomous unit ruled by a joint Armenian–Muslim council, but when Azerbaijan became independent it claimed the whole of former Yelizavetpol province, including Nakhchavan, Zangezur and Karabagh. The Karabagh Armenians, however, were determined to stay free and rejected demands to submit to Azerbaijan and its new ally, Ottoman Turkey. In August 1918 the Karabagh Armenians’ Assembly in Shushi elected a people's government to organize its defence, but after the destruction of an Armenian village and the incursion of a Turkish army from Baku, the Armenian authorities capitulated. Immediately the Azerbaijanis and Turks launched a reign of terror against the population (especially political leaders and intelligentsia), while, as in previous centuries, Armenian guerrillas continued resistance in rural districts.[104]

This deliberate assault on the Armenians of Karabagh confirms the view that Turkish policy towards Armenians in general was genocidal, and they used the vocabulary of later fascists: '*we* need…', 'destiny draws *us*' – but 'you Armenians stand in our way' – so 'you must draw aside' to allow our chosen race to reach its goal of establishing the 'Turanian' empire.[105] According to an Armenian historian, in 1908 the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire welcomed the Young Turk revolution, which, ostensibly

> compelled [Sultan] Abdul-Hamid to submit to a constitutional regime based on civil and religious liberties for all Ottoman subjects…Ironically, it was these same Young Turks…who were to perpetrate that which no sultan had ever contemplated – solving the Armenian problem by extirpating the entire Armenian population.[106]

Now, it appeared, Azerbaijanian politicians had joined in this régime of 'ethnic cleansing'.[107] (Nor was any opposition to Turkish domination of the region taken by British officialdom.) In September 1918 General Andranik's Armenian partisan division was encamped in Zangezur along with some 30,000 refugees. Just before the disintegration of the Transcaucasian Federation a mass of Armenian refugees, finding themselves in a desperate situation south of Lori in Yerevan province, had made a stand against the Turkish army and Kurdish irregulars. On 24 May these Armenian partisans routed their enemies and advanced towards Alexandropol and Akhalkalaki, until a truce arranged in Batumi brought them to a halt. Only Andranik rejected this truce, and withdrew eastward with his 3,000-strong army, hoping to join the British forces in Persian Azerbaijan. Frustrated in this, he stopped in Zangezur, where his men harassed Azerbaijani villages for the rest of the year. Thus Zangezur became a centre of Armenian resistance, and it was to Andranik that the Karabagh partisans turned for help. On its way to relieve them in November 1918, however, Andranik's force was halted by British officers, and General Thomson warned that if the Armenians continued to fight this would prejudice their case at the Peace Conference. Andranik submitted to this threat – leaving the Karabagh settlements at the mercy of the Azerbaijanis, who promptly destroyed them.[108]

Thomson and subsequent British commanders remained very rigid in their conventionally negative attitude towards the Armenians, and adopted a pro-Azerbaijani policy within their basic priority of restoring the Russian Empire and postponing decisions about its subject nations until the Peace Conference. Thomson therefore accepted the views of Khoyskiy's government on areas such as Karabagh where, ostensibly, law and order needed to be restored and local ‘anarchy’ suppressed. Khoyskiy's provocative choice for governor-general of Karabagh and Zangezur was Khosrow Bek Sultanov, who had collaborated with the Kemalist Nuri Pasha and incited Azerbaijanis against the Armenians in Karabagh. The Azerbaijani government met protests that Karabagh was Armenian territory with conventional phrases about ‘violation of Azerbaijan's sovereignty’ and ‘interference in its internal affairs’, while British officers, assuring the Armenians that the appointment of Sultanov did not commit the Allies to Azerbaijan's permanent possession of Karabagh, rejected their appeals for his dismissal, and again warned the Armenians that any attempt by *them* to hold territory by force would ‘weaken their case’.[109]

Although the Karabagh National Assembly reasserted that Karabagh was now a part of the Republic of Armenia, where they ‘denied Azerbaijani authority in any form whatever’, the British gave Sultanov an armed escort to Shushi, and tried to persuade local Armenian leaders to sign a document inculpating themselves if they resisted Azerbaijanian government authority, and stating that any armed resistance would be construed as hostility towards the British government. When two Armenian Council advisers brought in from Baku expressed sympathy with the Karabagh people's resistance, the British commander simply ‘had the pair placed in an armored car and exiled’.[110] Persistent Armenian opposition to Azerbaijani Turkish governorship of Karabagh, expressed reasonably in appeals to the British authorities, evoked curt dismissal or reiteration of bland clichés,[111] and Armenian politicians could not understand how Britain, the supposed champion of fair play, expected them to submit to administration by Azerbaijanis who, ‘true to their Turkic forebears…labored fervidly to extirpate the Armenians, who were the only civilized element…the only champions of liberty [in the Caucasus]’.[112]

On 2 June 1919 Sultanov proceeded to impose his rule on Karabagh, ordering the cessation of Armenian political activity, surrounding the Armenian quarter of Shushi with Azerbaijani troops, and demanding the surrender of Armenians who occupied the citadel. Finally, defying British attempts to restrain them, Sultanov's troops started shooting, and escalated the trouble by bringing in Azerbaijani–Kurdish cavalry to raid neighbouring Armenian villages, which were ruined, and some 600 of their inhabitants exterminated.[113]

Since January 1919, American military and consular representatives arriving in the Caucasus had been unanimously critical of Britain's pro-Azerbaijani attitude and lack of support for the Armenians.[114] The only thing that can be said in defence of British actions is that perhaps the military authorities had little alternative to acting as they did. Charged by Allied authority with keeping the peace and preventing territorial annexations before the official settlement of borders at the Peace Conference, they had to police nearly 600 miles of the former Russian Empire's frontier with Turkey and Persia – in practice a mosaic of unmarked local frontiers between the Azerbaijanis on the one hand and Armenians on the other, forming the border from Ardahan to Karabagh. The two nationalities were passionately antagonistic to each other and generally volatile. Like all Caucasians, they were accustomed to carrying and using weapons, and rejected laws imposed by outsiders. Even in peacetime these lands were rather wild, and Baedeker's 1914 guide warned travellers that in the Caucasus, 'Public Safety is on a somewhat unstable footing, and it is as well to avoid travelling alone'; particularly in mountainous areas, where Kurdish nomads might be encountered, it was advisable 'to take a revolver and procure an escort of Cossacks from the frontier officer'.[115]

Early in 1919, after the Paris Peace Conference had begun, British involvement in the Caucasus was undermined by Prime Minister David Lloyd George's desire to withdraw all British troops from 'Russia' irrespective of any considerations of the 'self-determination' of the subject peoples of the empire. British officers accordingly prepared for departure, and the role of the UK in Transcaucasia was taken over by various United States missions. Appeals by the Armenian communities of Yerevan and Tbilisi that a British administration should be established in Karabagh fell on deaf ears. Sultanov, despite even British accusations of his responsibility for the recent massacre, was reinstated in Shushi, and the UK closed its mission there in August. So hopeless, indeed, were the conditions the Karabagh Armenians found themselves in that – pending the decisions of the Peace Conference – they succumbed and signed an agreement recognizing their 'temporary' inclusion in the Azerbaijan Republic, which assured them of various civil rights, including cultural autonomy and a joint Armenian–Azerbaijani administration.[116]

The territorial claims of neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan were limited to Karabagh. In January 1919, Zangezur with its 30,000 Armenian refugees (half of them evicted from Nakhchavan) had been included along with Karabagh under Sultanov's governorship. Despite British threats, the Armenian National Council in Zangezur remained fiercely defiant and, after declaring that Zangezur formed an integral part of the Armenian Republic and would fight to remain so, it drove out the Azerbaijani and Kurdish forces. Then the British dictators relented and agreed to leave Zangezur outside Sultanov's governorship. Meanwhile, after a hard winter in the Zangezur mountains, Andranik had protested to the British military mission about its inaction over the repatriation of Armenian refugees, and in March 1919 he took his troops across the mountains to Yerevan. There, receiving no succour for the refugees from either the Armenian government or the British, he decided to disband his Armenian division and departed for Europe to plead his country's cause there.[117]

In Nakhchavan few of its former Armenian inhabitants remained, so that in the British general's eyes it belonged to Azerbaijan, and no Armenian claims were countenanced.[118] In January 1919 a truce arranged by the British with Azerbaijani leaders in Nakhchavan was imposed on the Armenians, and a temporary British governorship of the region was organized. The following month, despite strong Azerbaijani protests, the British decided that the southern part of Yerevan region should indeed be added to Nakhchavan under a separate Armenian administration.[119] From March 1919 Thomson and his staff, alerted to increasing Turkish infiltration and 'Turanian' propaganda in the Caucasus, completely reversed their policy, reinforcing British garrisons and permitting the Armenian government to take over the administration of Nakhchavan and repatriate refugees there. To achieve this the British army carried out a bloodless coup d'état in the region, after which Dro's troops took over. For the British the main purpose was to free themselves from commitments in Armenia in preparation for their withdrawal, after which, despite Khatisyan's earnest request for protection, they left only five small missions behind. Along with the Armenian army thousands of refugees poured into Nakhchavan, relieved to find shelter, but considerably increasing tension in 'a land that had become a Muslim domain', and where the Azerbaijanis and Kurds were united in common antagonism towards Armenians.[120]

Farther west, in Kars province, even a specific supplementary clause added to the Mudros armistice, requiring the evacuation of Turkey's 50,000 soldiers by February 1919, had not removed all Muslims. Much of the province was still under the sway of Azerbaijani feudal lords and Kurdish chieftains, hardly any of whom were prepared to collaborate with Armenians – although their own adherence to Shiᶜah and Sunni Islam respectively reduced their unity of action. When the Turkish army did move out of Kars, it did not go far: encamped in the nearest Turkish *vilayet*s, they gave reassurance to the Muslims in Kars, but indicated their intention to reclaim the province at the first opportunity.[121]

In 1916 there had been 118,000 Armenians in Kars province (32.4% of the population), but by 1919 few of these remained, while 100,000 refugees waited, destitute, in Tbilisi and Yerevan provinces for an opportunity to return and settle there. The attitude of the British administration in Kars was grudging: although they knew the scale of the refugee problem, they released no food supplies for them and forbade Armenia to occupy the province as the Turks withdrew. The appointment of Armenian officials and police – eventually to provide a civilian administration with Muslim participation – was presented as a big concession, and British caution was explained in an instruction to Armenian officials to avoid offending the Muslims by any display of racial prejudice, so that Armenia could present a good case to the Peace Conference. In Kars itself the Muslims had already organized a 'defence force' against the Armenians, and in January 1919, less than three months after Turkey's defeat and submission to the Allies' armistice, they announced the creation of a 'South-West Caucasus Republic', stretching from Batumi to Nakhchavan. By then the Turkish chauvinist movement of Mustafa Kemal was gathering momentum in eastern Anatolia, in rebellion against the sultan's authority on the one hand, and the Allies' plans to partition Turkey on the other. Far from complying, Kemal disregarded both the sultan and the demobilization required by the Mudros armistice, and ordered the strengthening of his army.[122]

Despite these ominous signs, General Thomson was not permitted to occupy Kars or strengthen its garrison against increasing Turkish provocations, because Lloyd George's cabinet had decreed that British forces must be withdrawn from the Caucasus as soon as the Turks cleared out of Kars. By the end of March, however, prospects for installing an Armenian government in Kars and resettling Armenian refugees were looking so bad that, despite the cabinet order, the British commander in Istanbul decided to postpone evacuation, and arranged another small, bloodless coup. Early in April 2,500 British, Gurkha and Sikh troops appeared in Kars and surrounded the premises of the Muslim Council; fourteen of its Turkish activists were deported to Malta, and the province came under martial law. A new multi-ethnic council was then formed, the repatriation of Armenians began, and on 28 April 1919 Kars was united with the Republic of Armenia. This was a deceptive triumph, however, since government pressure on the British command to withdraw from the Caucasus was insistent, and Armenian politicians knew that by the middle of May they would be abandoned, having a very shaky hold on Kars.[123]

The strategic realities lurking behind the British presence – and impending absence – in the Caucasus now became inescapable. Caucasian leaders were incensed to learn that much of the military stores being removed from the Kars fortress were destined for Denikin's army, and thus for the attempted reimposition of Russian imperial authority. The alternatives to this outcome were subjugation by the Bolsheviks if they triumphed over the Whites, or else reinvasion by the Turkish army. The dénouement loomed inexorably during the summer and autumn of 1919 as Denikin's offensive against the Bolsheviks in south Russia achieved its brief success – coinciding, however, with the débacle of Alexander Kolchak's campaign in Siberia. Britain's military missions were gradually closing down, and only in September, when the last troops were about to leave Batumi, did London grant a postponement allowing a British contingent to remain there until July 1920. Meanwhile, no sooner had the British garrison left Nakhchavan in June 1919 than attacks on Armenians by Azerbaijanis and Turkish cavalry occurred over a wide area, so that the Armenians were expelled from the Araxes valley – the worst massacres of Armenians being perpetrated in Goghtan district in November. Intense Azerbaijani–Turkish pressure was also kept up on the Armenians of Karabagh and Zangezur, and the Azerbaijanis constantly claimed not only much of Yerevan province, but Kars as well.[124]

A British historian of the Caucasus sums up well the disaster following the cessation of Britain's custodianship of South Caucasus in 1919, despite warnings from Curzon, Churchill and Lord Balfour about the probable extermination of Armenians by the Turks and the Kurds:

> Curzon had…written to the American Ambassador on 19 August 1919, asking for clarification of American intentions regarding the often promised mandate for Armenia. He pointed out that British financial responsibilities in this region had become so overwhelming that the Government would not feel justified in continuing them for a further period. The outcome of all this muddle and vacillation is well known. British forces withdrew from Caucasian Azerbaijan in August 1919; Baku fell to the Russian Communists in the following spring, on 27 April 1920. The Americans failed to accept and establish their mandate over Armenia. Most of this unhappy land was incorporated in the Republic of Turkey, though the

area centred on Erevan now forms the Armenian SSR. Batumi was evacuated by British units in July 1920. Independent Georgia had signed a treaty with the Soviet Union on 7 May 1920, but was invaded and overcome by the Eleventh Red Army in the following February. Britain's policy of intervention in Russia failed ignominiously and her protégés had to endure their fate alone. In March 1920, when the British mission in Siberia had been forced to close down, Curzon had minuted: ‘So ends a highly discreditable enterprise.’ The same could have been said about the conduct of Great Britain and her allies towards the Caucasian peoples, beguiled by fine promises and finally left to their own devices in their hour of greatest need.[125]

[1] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 15, 186, 190–1; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 123–4, 211–12.

[2] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 38.

[3] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 206–7; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 39–42.

[4] Thus ‘Azerbaijan’ became the name of a modern state, and in Russian the old meaningless term ‘Tatars’ was officially replaced by ‘Azerbaijanis’. See Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 189–91, 196–7; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 117, 124; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 129–31.

[5] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 467–9, 478–9, 481–2; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 203; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 127; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 76, 113, 129–34.

[6] Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 177–9.

[7] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 186–7; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 128–30, 136–8, 156; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 262, 269–72, 291–2, 306, 316; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 133, 134, 137.

[8] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 485, 488–90, 492; L. C. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, London, 1920, pp. 21–2, 155–8, 168, 196–9; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 218–19; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 69; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 30; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 131–5; G. von Rauch, *A History of Soviet Russia*, 5th revised edn, London, 1967, pp. 97–9; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 278–80, 282, 288–91, 305–6, 316–17, 326–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 127, 134; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 59, 69.

[9] On 14 September, just before the Turks entered Baku, Shahumyan and twenty-five other Bolshevik commissars escaped by ship, which took them across the Caspian to Turkmenistan; six days later they were shot by order of the SR executive committee in Ashkhabad: Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 337–43. If they had not perished at that time but succeeded in reaching the Bolsheviks in Astrakhan, they would almost certainly have been tortured and shot along with many other loyal communists in the KP Terror of 1934–7.

[10] Dunsterville, *Adventures*, pp. 207–9, 214–50, 279–90, 313–17; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 137–44; B. Pearce, 'Dunsterforce and the defence of Baku, August–September 1918', *Revolutionary Russia*, 1997, 10, 1, pp. 59–62, 65, 66; Suny, *Baku Commune*, pp. 305–6, 317–19, 325–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 138–9.

[11] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 497–8; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 239; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 143; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 132, 140–1, 161.

[12] A. A. A., 'Yeshcho iz pechalnogo proshlogo: proiskhozhdeniye Azerbaydzhanskogo parlamenta', *Kavkaz* (Munich), 1935, no. 12/24, pp. 28–30. This source makes it clear that with only three weeks between the Turkish armistice on 30 October and the proposed opening of parliament on 24 November, no true general election could have been held in a backward country filled with turmoil and with very little democratic experience. Consequently, Kazemzadeh probably exaggerates somewhat in saying that the Azerbaijan parliament was 'elected on the basis of universal suffrage, with women voting' (although he does add that 'The democratic laws under which the [parliament] was elected did not reflect the real state of affairs'): *Struggle*, p. 166. Kazemzadeh's account is echoed in Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 94: 'the December multiparty elections for Parliament…which had been elected by universal suffrage'.

[13] Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 145–6.

[14] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 222.

[15] *Ibid*., pp. 143–4, 146, 222–4, 226–7; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 129, 139, 144.

[16] W. M. Thomson, ‘Transcaucasia 1918–1919’, *Revolutionary Russia*, 1997, 10, 1, p. 87. The troops under Thomson's command here included detachments of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, the Gloucestershire Regiment, the Rifle Brigade, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, the Gurkhas, the Rajput Light Infantry and the Sikh Pioneers: Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 204, 207, 226, 231–41.

[17] Lang, ‘British policy’, p. 207.

[18] Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 141–2.

[19] W. M. Thomson, [report to the director of military intelligence, 6 December 1918], quoted in Lang, ‘British policy’, p. 207.

[20] ‘Resolutions on the Caucasus and Armenia’ [drafted for the Imperial War Cabinet, December 1918], quoted in Lang, ‘British policy’, pp. 208–9.

[21] W. S. Churchill, *The World Crisis: the Aftermath*, London, 1929, pp. 163ff., 237, 245, 256–7.

[22] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 223; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 125–7, 147–53, 191–4, 204–5; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 213–14; Suny, *Making*, pp. 197–200; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 133–4.

[23] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 11, 15, 91–2, 198–9, 205–6; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 67, 70.

[24] C. E. Bechhofer-Roberts, *In Denikin's Russia and the Caucasus, 1919–1920*, London, 1921, p. 14, quoted in Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 199; Pliyev, ‘Iz istorii Yuzhnoy Osetii’, pp. 11–12.

[25] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, p. 147; Kakagasanov and Musayev, ‘Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki’, p. 32; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 233–7.

[26] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 223; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 154, 160–2, 205.

[27] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 211–12, 217.

[28] Percentages of the main nationalities in these districts in c. 1916–18 were:

	Armenians	Azerbaijanis	Georgians
Akhaltsikhe	38	?	35
Akhalkalaki	73	9	9
Lori	73	6	0.2
Alexandropol	97	2	0.2

Echmiadzin	64	36	–
Yerevan	60	33	–
Sharur-Daralagöz	29	70	–
Nakhchavan	40	0	–

Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 67, 70; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 15, 199, 307 n. 5.

[29] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 11, 15, 55, 186–7, 190–202, 205–7, 229, 237–41; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 35, 67–72; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 109, 127, 155–6. In 1914 Lori's population had included only 100 Georgian inhabitants, as against 42,000 Armenians, 3,300 Azerbaijanis, 3,350 Greeks and 8,500 Russians: Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 69.

[30] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 73–8.

[31] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 99–122; Thomson, ‘Transcaucasia 1918–1919’, p. 86.

[32] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 124, 125.

[33] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 93–105; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 213.

[34] Cf. *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. II, 1890, p. 121.

[35] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 60.

[36] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 250–1, 259, 274; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 213, 255; Lang, *Armenia*, pp. 200–10. Only France opposed the inclusion of Cilicia in the proposed Greater Armenian state, because of its own ambition to obtain the region when Turkey was being dismembered in 1919: Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 273–6.

[37] Georgia claimed c. 34,200 square miles and Azerbaijan 55,400; Armenia's own maximum claim was to c. 32,000 square miles. Added together, the territories claimed by the three Transcaucasian republics amounted to 121,600 square miles, while the total area of Transcaucasia was only 80,100 square miles: *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXVII, p. 113; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 6, 290.

[38] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 127.

[39] A. Bennigsen, ‘Muslim guerrilla warfare in the Caucasus (1918–1928)’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1993, 2, 1, p. 47.

[40] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 204–5; Kettle, *Russia and the Allies*, vol. II, p. 369; Meijer, ed., *Trotsky Papers*, pp. 180–1. A (generally useful) Soviet history of Daghestan gives a rather misleading account of this Allied intervention: ‘Turkish and British invaders also adopted the role of organizers of inter-ethnic strife and civil war. The British mission established in Vladikavkaz became the headquarters of counter-revolution throughout the whole North Caucasus’: *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 67.

[41] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 144–5; E. Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War*, Boston, 1987, p. 94; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 49; Shebzukhov, 'Krasnyy terror v Adygeye', pp. 294–9.

[42] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 136–42; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 67; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 32; Natirboff, 'Circassians' part', p. 142; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 42, 46–8, 54–7, 63; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 449.

[43] Churchill, *World Crisis: the Aftermath*, p. 78, quoted in Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 244.

[44] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, p. 134.

[45] Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, pp. 164–5; Z. Temirkhanov, 'Doklad…o poyezdke chrezvychaynoy delegatsii v Terskuyu oblast dlya razgovorov s Dobrovolcheskoy Armiyey generala Denikina', in Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 195; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 122, 124.

[46] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, p. 480n.; Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, p. 147; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 203, 233–6.

[47] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 153–4; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 48; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 453.

[48] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 67; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 86–8, 91–2; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 36–8; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 117–18.

[49] Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 87–90. Cf. Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 80. The term 'gololobyy' 'bare skull' was applied to all Muslims because of their men's custom of shaving their heads.

[50] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 15.

[51] *Ibid*., p. 16; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 52; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 49–1; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 59, 84–9, 91–2, 177–9; Totoyev, *et al*., eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 36–42.

[52] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 15–16; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 67; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 52; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 49; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 419; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 205; Totoyev, *Ocherki et al*., eds., vol. II, p. 46; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 112, 117–19.

[53] *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 51–2.

[54] G. Orjonikidze, [telegram to Lenin, 8 February 1919], in Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 205; also pp. 84–5, 91, 189–93; Temirkhanov, 'Doklad o poyezdke', pp. 189–93.

[55] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 16–17; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 145–6; *Istoriya Dagestana*,

vol. III, pp. 72–3, 85; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 32; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 53; *Kratkaya istoriya SSSR*, vol. II, p. 116; M. Z. Mahomedov, 'Pochemu ne sostoyalos severokavkazskoye emirstvo', *Nash Dagestan*, 1993, no. 165–6, p. 48; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 52–3, 56–8; Orjonikidze, [telegram to Lenin, 8 February 1919]; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 45–51.

[56] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 64–9; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 129–31.

[57] An anti-Bolshevik government created on the middle Volga in May 1918 in the name of the disrupted Constituent Assembly by Russian Socialist Revolutionaries with the co-operation of the Czecho-Slovakian Corps of ex-prisoners of war: see Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, pp. 46–9, 53–4, 56–7, 63–5.

[58] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 489–92, 507; M. Butbay, *Vospominaniya o Kavkaze*, translated from Turkish by Z. M. Buniyator, Makhachkala, 1993, pp. 4, 37; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 56, 64–5, 68–72, 74; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 30; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 51; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 125; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 64–6, 70–5, 104–5, 119, 185–8.

[59] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, p. 495; Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 16; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 74; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', pp. 30–1; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 51; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 139; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 76, 78; N. Tarkovskiy,

'Doneseniye Ismail Khaki Beyu 21 oktyabrya 1918 g.', in Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 180–4.

[60] Ivanov, ed., 'Gorskaya kontrrevolyutsiya', pp. 138, 145s; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', pp. 31–2; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 174–6, 243; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], p. 52.

[61] Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 32.

[62] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, p. 294.

[63] *Ibid*., p. 405; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 32; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 201; Kosok, 'Revolution and sovietization', [pt. 2], pp. 50, 52–3; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 185; Temirkhanov, 'Doklad o poyezdke', pp. 189, 196–201.

[64] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 17; Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 151, 160; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 81, 85–7; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 32; Mahomedov, 'Pochemu', p. 48; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 105–6.

[65] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 161–2; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 239–41.

[66] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 17, 21; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 86; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 33; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 210, 218; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 105–6.

[67] P. Gentizon, *La résurrection géorgienne*, Paris, 1921, cited in Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 201.

[68] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 99, 100–3; Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 241; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 169–72, 200–2, 237–8; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 222.

[69] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 153–8, 161–3; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 236–9, 245; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 218; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 53; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 152.

[70] F. H. Kisch, [letter to the director of military intelligence, 21 February 1919], cited in Lang, 'British policy', pp. 211–12.

[71] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 154–8, 161–3, 166; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 238–42, 245.

[72] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 190; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 218, 228; Suny, *Making*, pp. 197–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 152.

[73] R. H. Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, Princeton, 1968, pp. 67–86.

[74] H. Bammat, 'The Caucasus and the Russian Revolution (from a political viewpoint)', *Central Asian Survey*, 1991, 10, 4, pp. 20–1; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 249, 273–4; Ullman, *Britain*, pp. 95, 99–117.

[75] Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 151, 411; Longhurst, *Adventures in Oil*, pp. 18–19, 24–33, 50–1.

[76] Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 65.

[77] Keddie and Amanat, 'Iran', pp. 200, 204–6.

[78] T. Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, [revised edn], London, 2000, pp. 30–1, 34–5; Keddie and Amanat, 'Iran', pp. 205–6.

[79] Keddie and Amanat, 'Iran', p. 208; Sykes, *A History of Persia*, vol. II, pp. 452–7, etc.

[80] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 3–4, 27–35; Keddie and Amanat, 'Iran', pp. 204–5.

[81] As southern and northern Azerbaijan are separate entities which figure largely in twentieth-century Caucasian history and need to be distinguished from each other, they will be referred to below as 'Baku–Azerbaijan' (Russian or northern) and 'Tabriz–Azerbaijan' (Persian or southern).

[82] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 384–6, 389, 442–7, 483–6; Dunsterville, *Adventures of Dunsterforce*, pp. 1–2, etc.; Taylor, *First World War*, pp. 106–7.

[83] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, p. 50; Hambly, 'Pahlavī autocracy: Riżā Shāh', p. 217.

[84] Sykes, *History of Persia*, pp. 489–90.

[85] Dunsterville, *Adventures*, pp. 7, 14; Hambly, ‘Pahlavī autocracy: Riżā Shāh’, p. 218; Keddie and Amanat, ‘Iran’, p. 208.

[86] Hambly, ‘Pahlavī autocracy: Riżā Shāh’, pp. 217–18; see also Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 42, 51, 117–18.

[87] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 35–7, 42, 46–51, 116–18; Hambly, ‘Pahlavī autocracy: Riżā Shāh’, pp. 209–10, 214–18; the latter calls the Gilan satellite simply ‘the Soviet Republic of Gīlān’, but the former authenticates the name ‘Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran’ by mentioning the newspaper *Komonist-e Iran*, ‘Communist of Iran’, briefly issued in Rasht.

[88] During this operation, directed by the governor of Tabriz, Muhbar as-Saltanah, Khiyabani was probably killed by the Cossacks: Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 50–1, 206 n. 102.

[89] Hambly, ‘Pahlavī autocracy: Riżā Shāh’, pp. 216–17.

[90] See references to this ‘Great Game for the domination of the world’, (conceived at that time as being played only between Britain and Russia!) in Hambly, ‘Pahlavī autocracy: Riżā Shāh’, pp. 215–16; Keddie and Amanat, ‘Iran’, p. 209; Amin Saikal, ‘Iranian foreign policy, 1921–1979’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, p. 427.

[91] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 265–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 153–7.

[92] Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 147–50.

[93] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 166–7, 222–5, 277–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 187–90.

[94] Hovannisian, *Road in Independence*, p. 241; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 369; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 141–2; Ullman, *Britain*, pp. 82–6.

[95] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 165–6, 228–30; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 155, 157–8.

[96] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 151, 154, 160–3; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 243–5; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 153; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 122; Ullman, *Britain*, pp. 224–5.

[97] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 163–4; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 246–7; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 218; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 153, 158; *Zhizn natsionalnostey*, 15 June 1919, no. 22 (30), cited in Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 245.

[98] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 181–2.

[99] *Ibid*., pp. 169–70, 182–3, 214, 246, 272–3; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 153, 158.

[100] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, pp. 165–6; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 181, 246–7, 253–64; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 128–9; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 159.

[101] In fact, it is not especially mountainous, with two peaks of 12,200 and 8,940 feet, and much hilly land over 3,000 feet; there is much more mountainous land north and west of Lake Sevan in the wider Karabagh, from the river Berkushad (in Armenian, Vorotan) in the south to Ganja in the north.

[102] *Azärbaijan SSR Atlasy*, pp. 9, 17, 18; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XII, p. 222.

[103] Lang, *Armenia*, p. 23.

[104] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 83, 85–6.

[105] M. Vehib Pasha, a Turkish general, quoted by A. Khatisyan, *Hayastani Hanrapetutyan dsagumn u zargatsume*, Athens, 1930, p. 70, cited by Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 195.

[106] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, p. 10.

[107] The fact that Azerbaijani politicians were deeply involved in Turkish policy in Armenia at that time is seldom mentioned – not even, surprisingly, in a recent book on the genocide of the Armenians: Balakian, *Burning Tigris*.

[108] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, pp. 191–4; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 86–9.

[109] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 90, 157–9, 160–1, 162–4; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 142–7.

[110] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 164–7.

[111] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 167–75.

[112] *Ibid*., vol. I, p. 172.

[113] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 172–7.

[114] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 178–82, 211.

[115] Baedeker, *Russia*, pp. 445, 494, 496.

[116] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 163–5, 168, 181–2 esp. n. 69, 185–8; vol. II, pp. 55–7, 195–203, 316–403; ‘Po Kavkazu i Zakavkazyu. Vremennoye soglasheniye armyan Nagornogo Karabakha s Azerbaydzhanskim pravitelstvom’, *Znamya truda*, 26 August 1919, in D. P. Guliyev, ed., *K istorii obrazovaniya Nagorno-Karabakhskoy avtonomnoy oblasti Azerbaydzhanskogo SSR: dokumenty i materialy*, Baku, 1989, pp. 23–5.

[117] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 162, 189–94, 231; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 143. Andranik did reach London in August 1919 and had talks at the War Office, to no avail: Lang, ‘British policy’, p. 213.

[118] In 1897, of Nakhchavan's 87,000 inhabitants, occupying a few districts scattered over only 10% of the total area, Azerbaijanis accounted for 57% and Armenians 42.2%: *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XXII, p. 705.

[119] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 228–35.

[120] *Ibid*., vol. I, p. 248.

[121] Hovannisian, *Road to Independence*, p. 63; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 67, 197, 199–202, 207, 226, 235–49, 267–9; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 159.

[122] Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. I, pp. 202–6, 209, 214.

[123] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 212–13, 215, 219–23.

[124] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 188–9; vol. II, pp. 63, 66–72, 75, 77, 105–7, 134, 216–38; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 162.

[125] Lang, 'British policy', pp. 213–14.

12 White Russians, native insurrection, Bolshevik conquest

North Caucasus, July 1919 to early 1920

After the Volunteer Army's expulsion of the communists from Petrovsk in May 1919 the whole of North Caucasus came under the arbitrary rule of the White Russian army and Cossacks. Although Denikin had refused outright to recognize the Mountain Republic, which united all the native peoples of North Caucasus, he decided that a separate government for the Daghestanis might mollify them while he launched his offensive against Ukraine. General Mehmed Khalilov was appointed ruler of Daghestan, with a dubious undertaking not to interfere in internal affairs. In fact, as soon as the Whites occupied the lowlands they conscripted Daghestanis as soldiers, sending them to join the forces besieging Tsaritsyn, far to the north on the Volga.

Denikin also appointed a new commander-in-chief of the Terek–Daghestan region, General Erdeli, who, on the verdict of a ‘military-shari^{c}ah court’, had several local Bolshevik leaders, including U. Buynakskiy, shot. This produced a series of anti-Russian insurrections in Daghestan, and an appeal by Khoyskiy for Azerbaijani volunteers to join the rebels. The uprising was centred on Levashi in the Dargo region, the ‘gateway to mountainous Daghestan’, where an unexpected alliance between Muslims and Bolsheviks was formed in July. Daghestani tribesmen answered the call of the local communist, Takho-Godi, while Islamists rallied around the Dargo mullah, ^{c}Ali-Hajji of Akusha, representing the socialist wing of Daghestani Muslims, in opposition to the ‘shariatists’ led by Uzun Hajji and Najmuddin of Hotso, who no longer opposed the Whites.[1]

According to a Bolshevik writer, ‘excessive’ prominence was given to Akusha's religious leadership to disguise the fact that the uprising was organized by the Bolsheviks – which proved no great credit to them, as it fizzled out after a couple of weeks. Thereafter Akusha was imprisoned at Levashi, while dissension broke out between Uzun Hajji and Imam Najmuddin, who after the prorogation of the Mountain parliament, had fled with other North Caucasian leaders to Tbilisi and set up a provisional Mountain Government (Mejlis). Meanwhile Uzun Hajji sought the support of all North Caucasian peoples for a new state independent of both the Whites and the Bolsheviks. As neither the Avars, led by Colonel Alikhanov and Imam Najmuddin, nor the Dargos and Kazikumukhs would join him, Uzun returned to Chechenia, where resistance to the Whites was stronger and the Ingush had already risen against the Terek Cossacks in June 1919.[2]

The immediate cause of Daghestan's second anti-White uprising was Khalilov's order for conscription of Daghestanis for the White Cossacks – a servitude the Volunteer Army frequently imposed on the native peoples; most recently, in February 1919, they had ordered the mobilization of all Ingush men aged between 18 and 40. When the draft of more than 7,000 men was announced in August 1919 another anti-Russian rebellion broke out in the Dargo and Avar regions. Akusha was freed from prison, and a White Russian punitive detachment was annihilated and its weapons taken by the poorly armed Daghestanis. The insurrection, led by Uzun Hajji, spread through the whole of mountainous Daghestan and Chechenia.[3]

Survivors of the Bolshevik débacle in early 1919 who had fled to Daghestan organized anti-White partisans to fight Uzun Hajji's forces. While the contribution of native Bolsheviks to this uprising was more explicit than in Akusha's case, it was nevertheless paradoxical: 'Although the aims of Gikalo['s Red Army units] and the Red Chechen partisans led by…Arslanbek Sheripov were diametrically opposed to those of Uzun Hajji's followers…for tactical reasons they fought along with [his] detachments'[4] – just like Uzun Hajji's tactical collaboration with the Bolsheviks. Russian communist historians asserted that the Muslim nationalist spirit ('shari^{c}ah and revolution') in the Council for the Defence of North Caucasus (founded in September 1919 by Sultansaid Kazbekov) gradually gave way to Bolshevik influence, and that antagonism between the masses and the upper class and 'kulaks' increased during the struggle against the 'White Guards' and Cossacks.[5] According to Kirov's report at the time,

> Apart from a bunch of traitors and renegade officers who have sold themselves to Denikin, all sections of the mountain peoples…reduced to despair by Denikin's brutality, have refused outright to pay tribute or provide the regiments demanded of them to fight against Soviet power and, armed only with rifles and daggers, have thrown themselves into the bloody battle against the officer–Cossack bandits…Their universal fervour, amounting to fanaticism, extends also to the women, children and old people, who are bearing the whole burden of bringing supplies to the

> front and the insurgent units because all their menfolk are under arms.[6]

The standard Soviet history of Daghestan explained unashamedly how the Bolsheviks (who in fact were mainly onlookers in this struggle) 'had to employ cautious tactics to keep all the anti-Denikin forces united…while using all means to strengthen their own position so that, as the Red Army approached, they could take the front over completely and ensure the victory of Soviet power'. These tactics were planned far from the fighting, by a committee of communists meeting secretly in Baku, with a view to a quick renewal of Bolshevik propaganda in Daghestan to overcome the so-called bourgeois-nationalist ideology (of poor mountain tribesmen, to whom apocalyptic Marxism meant nothing). A Bolshevik appeal exhorted them to organize village soviets composed of 'sensible' peasants and workers, while all able-bodied men should join the army, because 'This is the final battle. The people of Daghestan have entered the struggle for a just and righteous cause, the cause of the workers and the oppressed of the whole world.'[7] On the other side, the presence of the Bolshevik component in Uzun's forces deceived the British mission into believing that the Daghestan uprising was not a national movement but a Bolshevik one, against which thousands of other 'sensible' mountain people were fighting in Denikin's army.[8]

The dimension lacking in such views is Islam. In fact by September 1919, 'Sheikh Uzun Hajji had liberated the mountains of Daghestan, Chechenia, Ossetia and Kabarda. [He] then proclaimed the independence of the North Caucasus once more and established the "North Caucasian Emirate".'[9] Although the idea of founding the emirate arose from a dubious letter sent to Uzun by 'the Sultan of Turkey', who as the caliph of Islam offered the prospective state his protection, this was enough to inspire a *ghazawat* movement – in the first place against the Whites for their attempt to stifle self-determination. Because of this and the refusal of the Allies to recognize the Mountain Republic, Emir Uzun declared that 'the North Caucasian Muslims… have staked their lives on the one card of gaining complete autonomy on the basis of a shari^{c}ah monarchy'. The bringer of the 'Sultan's letter' to Uzun in Vedeno, Inaluk Arslannuk, a Chechen of the Dyshni clan, became the emir's grand vizier and commander-in-chief.[10]

In December 1919 Inaluk appealed to the governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan to recognize the North Caucasus Emirate and give it support and material aid, because North Caucasus was their countries' front line, bearing the brunt of defence against 'Denikin and his bandits'. Inaluk strove to reassure his neighbours that the shari^{c}ah monarchy did not represent despotism but tolerance and good-neighbourliness. On the other hand, he dismissed the Mejlis of the 'so-called North Caucasus Republic' in Tbilisi, and complained that, while Georgia had provided the emirate with arms and troops led by Kereselidze which had briefly fought against the Whites in Chechenia, these Georgians had then absconded with many Daghestani horses.[11]

Moscow's lack of influence in North Caucasus in autumn 1919 is indicated by Kirov's message urging Lenin to woo sympathy in the emirate by assuring 'the supreme leader of the mountain revolutionary army', Uzun Hajji, that the Bolsheviks would grant it self-determination. By then the Whites had been expelled from Daghestan, Chechenia and Ingushia, and their grip on north-western Caucasus was also being challenged. Many Kuban Cossacks were deserting from the Volunteer Army and, although the Whites blockaded the Kuban Rada, they could neither stop the Cossack movement nor persuade the Karachay and other native peoples to join them against the Bolsheviks. Consequently, just as Denikin's campaign peaked with his capture of Oryol in October, he had to withdraw most Terek Cossacks from the Don front in order to strengthen his control of North Caucasus. However, here also many Terek Cossacks were defecting from the Whites, and some switched allegiance to the Bolsheviks as Denikin's advance on Moscow changed to a retreat. Now the Kuban Cossacks' overt opposition to Denikin, expressed in June by their treaty with the North Caucasian Republic, so infuriated him that he had the chairman of the Rada hanged – which only undermined morale further and provoked more desertions. Consequently, in January 1920 the Supreme Congress of the Kuban, Terek and Don Cossacks resolved to leave Denikin's command. The Kuban army, joined by the Circassian Division and many Circassian refugees, crossed the mountains towards the Black Sea coast. There they encountered the Red Army and, while some were lucky to escape by ship, many were stranded and had to surrender. Another body of Circassians under General Ulagay remained near Yekaterinodar, joining General Khvostikov's 'Army for the Rebirth of Russia' with its 10,000 anti-Red partisans. After fighting until October these were evacuated from Novorossiysk and joined General Pyotr Wrangel's defence of Crimea until the final White evacuation in November 1920.[12]

Only Denikin's disastrous defeat in winter 1919 brought him round to acknowledging, too late, the many 'borderland' states which had broken away from Russia. In February 1920 he issued a statement conceding the need

> to satisfy the sacred aspirations of the mountain peoples and create on the territory of Kabarda, Osetia, Ingushia, Chechenia, the Kumyk plain, mountain Chechenia and Daghestan a unified state with democratically based government…and to accord it *de facto* recognition until a definitive solution of the question by the All-Russian Constituent Assembly [and]…the Union of the Peoples of North Caucasus…I have issued an order to cease all operations against the mountain peoples of Daghestan.[13]

Had Denikin been able to concede these points two years earlier, this might have made a difference to the course of events, but now it only left the field open for the Bolsheviks to march into North Caucasus, forcing the Whites out of Yekaterinodar and neighbouring Circassian and Karachay areas, and their eventual evacuation from Novorossiysk in March 1920. With the expulsion of the White Russians from Daghestan by the emirate and its Bolshevik allies in October 1919, the communists were able to resume their activity there, and in January 1920 they formed a 'Bureau for the restoration of Soviet rule in North Caucasus', headed by the Russian Kirov, the Georgians Orjonikidze and Mdivani, and the Azerbaijani Narimanov. One of their first steps in 'liberating' North Caucasus in March 1920 was to finish off the emirate, whose creator, Uzun Hajji, is said to have accepted the sinecure of mufti of North Caucasus until his death in June. Thus, according to Soviet Russian publications, the Red Army under Tukhachevskiy gained control of Daghestan, and Soviet power was 'finally' established there.[14]

South Caucasus, 1919–1921

The resumption of Bolshevik activity in South Caucasus began immediately after the departure of British troops in August 1919. It was then clear that Azerbaijan and the whole of the independent Caucasus could not win: as White power evaporated and Allied support was withdrawn, the menace from Bolshevik Russia grew correspondingly. Underground communist activity came into the open in February 1919 when Anastas Mikoyan, a survivor of the Baku commissars' execution, was released from prison and assumed leadership of the Baku Bolsheviks. A short-lived strike which they fomented in May sharpened the conflict between the Bolsheviks and the Azerbaijani national socialist parties, such as Himmät. In September the Baku Bolsheviks, under orders from Moscow, began their propaganda, utilizing the threat of attack by Denikin as an argument for creating a 'Transcaucasian' Congress of Soviets, which the Tbilisi Menshevik Soviet rejected. However, their other stratagem of a conference of 'Bolshevik youth' stimulated some communist activity, even in Georgia, although an attempted Bolshevik uprising in Azerbaijan in November failed completely. Then the Müsawat party, recognizing the vulnerability to Russian conquest of a disunited South Caucasus, proposed the union of its three states for collective security, but this proved fruitless. Another, sinister, alliance formed in September 1919: a request for support from Kemal's Turkish nationalist movement was rejected by the Azerbaijan government, but was taken up by Lenin's puppet 'Azerbaijan Communist Party', initiating a period of collaboration between the ostensibly anti-nationalist Bolsheviks and the quasi-fascist revolutionaries of the new Turkey.[15]

Bolshevik Moscow's advance on ‘Transcaucasia’ was gradual: in November 1919 it invited Georgia to become its ally against the Whites, and this was rejected. The Armenian KP (Communist Party) committee was sent back to Yerevan with the task of re-establishing Bolshevism there, but pressure was applied more directly on Azerbaijan by the presence of the Red Army on the Daghestan border. In December, therefore, the Azerbaijani government again proposed the unification of the three South Caucasian republics for defence against Bolshevik attack. Communist Russia then proposed to Azerbaijan an alliance against Denikin, but received the reply that no negotiations could be considered until Moscow recognized Azerbaijan's independence; a similar proposal to Georgia in January 1920 was likewise rejected. Meanwhile, Lenin's Caucasus Committee exhorted the workers of Transcaucasia to rise up against their ‘bourgeois nationalist’ governments, and the Moscow-inspired Azerbaijan KP demanded the overthrow of ‘the khans and capitalists’. While the Azerbaijanian government received provocative notes from Moscow, in the Baku parliament support for a pro-Soviet policy gradually gained ground, and its main proponent, Khadzhinskiy, was poised to take over from Khoyskiy. By March 1920, as the Red Army conquered both Daghestan and Kuban, and a Bolshevik demonstration in Tbilisi, demanding the overthrow of the Georgian government, increased apprehension there, Lenin decided the time was ripe for the occupation of Azerbaijan. Armoured trains brought Red Army troops to Baku on 27 April, and in the absence of any resistance the foundation of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was declared.[16]

According to the 1919 mutual defence treaty, Georgia ought to have come to the assistance of Azerbaijan, but

Zhordania took no action because Azerbaijan itself offered no resistance – one reason being that, instead of protecting Azerbaijan's borders, the whole Azerbaijanian army was in Karabagh fighting the Armenians. The Azerbaijan government quickly submitted to the *fait accompli* – especially as the local KP had arranged a coup to coincide with the Russian invasion. Even Räsulzadä, on behalf of Müsawat, expressed only half-hearted defiance, and his parliament asserted Azerbaijan's continuing independence while accepting the 'temporary' authority of the government imposed by the Bolsheviks, and pretending that the final form of the country's government would be determined 'without outside pressure'. The new Azerbaijan administration was chaired by the communist Nariman Narimanov, who thereafter became the chief native embodiment of communism in South Caucasia. Among his associates in the KP and government of Azerbaijan were Mir Jafar Baghyrov, Dadash Buniyatzadä, Sultan Mejid Efendiyev, ^{c}Ali Heydar Garayev, Mirza Davud Huseynov, Ghazanfar Musabäkov, Hamid Sultanov and Chingiz Yyldyrym.

Although the Bolsheviks did not represent popular feeling in Azerbaijan, armed resistance to them as they tightened their grip on the country did not erupt until 26 May 1920 – centred, understandably, on Ganja, where Azerbaijan army units refused to submit to Russian control and fierce fighting ensued. Meanwhile Azerbaijani peasants rose against the communists in Zakatala, Javad, Lankaran, Karabagh, Nakhchavan (where the commander was the Turk Nuri Pasha) and other regions. Lenin's retaliation was ferocious, with hundreds of summary executions in Ganja and Baku. It was obvious that the Bolsheviks' aim was total subjugation and disarmament of the native population and, since the rural revolts were just as scattered and unco-ordinated as their predecessors in the nineteenth century, they were put down one by one with communist ruthlessness: rumour had it that 16,000 Muslims had been killed.[17]

The subjugation of Azerbaijan in 1920 was paralleled throughout South Caucasus. In Armenia local communists staged 1 May demonstrations in Yerevan, Alexandropol and other towns and, although these were said to be spontaneous and no uprising was intended, the demonstrations degenerated into riots against the Armenian government. Within a week the Armenian KP's Revolutionary Committee – backed by the Bolsheviks in Tbilisi, Baku and Moscow – declared itself the sole authority in Armenia. When the Armenian government rallied and deployed its army against the attempted coup, Red Army units in the vicinity were ordered to go to the assistance of the Armenian Bolsheviks. Fortunately, these troops were diverted to Azerbaijan, and by 20 May the Armenian national government had re-established order, after which the Armenian KP 'practically ceased to exist' for some time.[18]

In Georgia too a coup was attempted at the beginning of May by a small group of mainly Armenian communists, who attempted to occupy the Military Academy. As this action coincided with Red Army units from Azerbaijan crossing the Georgian frontier, it certainly could not be described as 'spontaneous', but was an opportunistic probing of Georgia's defences, which the Red Army abandoned when it encountered serious resistance. It did, however, bring pressure to bear on Tbilisi at a time when a Georgian emissary was in Moscow for secret talks about possible recognition of Georgia's independence by the Soviet Russian government. Had Georgia succumbed to the coup attempt, no doubt these talks would have been abandoned, but in fact they resulted in an agreement, signed on 7 May 1920, whereby Lenin's government granted *de jure* recognition to the autonomous Georgian Republic, while the Georgians were obliged to accept the existence of a Communist Party in Georgia authorized to hold meetings and issue propaganda. The Russian Bolsheviks on their side ‘promised’ to prevent any bodies which aimed to overthrow the Georgian government from operating in the RSFSR. The falsity of this merely tactical agreement was made clear by its description of the Red Army's invasion of Georgian territory as ‘a conflict between Georgia and Azerbaijan’.[19]

In fact there was much make-believe during 1920: the Georgian government kept a strict watch on Bolshevik activities, imprisoning or expelling many communists, while Moscow continued to plan its annexation of Georgia. The appointment of Kirov, fresh from the invasion of North Caucasus, as Soviet ambassador to Georgia was blatantly subversive, as he quickly confirmed by making an inflammatory speech to Georgian workers. Flagrant Soviet Russian provocation continued in September 1920, when a congress of Georgian communists in Baku openly discussed strategies for the overthrow of Georgia's government.[20]

Meanwhile Armenia found itself between two fires, as the new alliance between Lenin's Russian communists and Kemal's Turkish nationalists developed. On 28 September, when the latter advanced on Kars and Alexandropol, Moscow, far from protesting, ordered Armenia to allow the Turks free passage. On 18 November Armenia was forced to accept an armistice which allowed Turkey to keep the territory it had occupied and to control Armenia's railways. Two weeks later, with Bolshevik collusion, Turkey foisted on Armenia the Treaty of Alexandropol, whereby territory recently recognized as Armenian by the Treaty of Sèvres

(August 1920) was returned to Turkey. To complete its subjection, Armenia was forced to disarm and grant the Turks the right of free movement throughout Armenia.

In fact, all of this was only the prelude to Moscow's own exploitation of Armenia's weakness. On 28 November, while Prime Minister Khatisyan was negotiating with the Turks, the Red Army invaded Armenia from Azerbaijan, staging a ‘spontaneous’ uprising, and proclaiming the creation of the Armenian SSR. A pretence at collaboration between the Dashnaḳ government and the Bolshevik invaders lasted a few days, after which direct Soviet rule was imposed, and many Armenian political leaders and army officers were imprisoned or deported. The most noticeable features of the new Soviet Russian régime were, as everywhere else, food requisitioning and the Red Army's practice of living off the land and pillaging stores, farms and houses – the ‘policy of War communism’.[21]

During these developments the Georgians attempted to live a semi-normal life despite numerous Russian-inspired provocations and rumours. Some of these centred on Batumi, which in July 1920 had been transferred to Georgia by the British when they withdrew from the Caucasus. Georgia (under its Menshevik--SD government) immediately gave further evidence of its imperialist attitudes by threatening the Acḥarian Muslims with severe penalties if they attempted any resistance to Georgian rule. Meanwhile the Georgian government was trying to establish itself in the wider world. Politicians from Tbilisi visited western Europe in summer 1920, soliciting political recognition, financial loans and economic contracts. After partial success they were disillusioned when most Western representatives in Paris, including the British, voted against Georgia's membership of the League of Nations. Only in January 1921 in a sudden reversal of policy was Georgia granted *de jure* recognition – on which Soviet Russian officials congratulated Zhordania, assuring him that Russia wanted to live in peace and friendship with the Georgian Republic.

Despite this hypocritical sentiment, the Georgians had by December discovered that the Red Army – its war against the Whites now over – was massing on Georgia's border near Zakatala for an invasion, in anticipation of which the Georgian government increased the size of its own army. On 26 January 1921 the Russians accused Georgian troops of firing at their soldiers, and on 11 February anti-Georgian disorders were staged along the Armenian and Azerbaijani borders. Acting according to plan, Georgian Bolsheviks formed a 'revolutionary committee' which proclaimed Soviet power and appealed for assistance in their ostensibly spontaneous uprising against 'forces of European reaction'. Sustaining this grim farce, Lenin's satraps obligingly sent three separate armies by way of Azerbaijan, the Mamison pass and South Osetia to Kutaisi, and the Black Sea coast, to occupy Georgia – while Moscow lied that this was a war between Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, and even offered to act as peace-maker.[22]

Stalin and Orjonikidze disagreed with Lenin over the 'Transcaucasian' campaign, and Lenin (although in no sense reluctant to take Georgia or any other place by force) urged caution and patience, concealing the military annexation of non-Russian territory behind the façade of spontaneous uprising by local people, who then 'appealed for help' from the Red Army. The disagreement was purely tactical: Lenin's aim was to avoid stirring up local resistance or foreign intervention but, above all, to ensure that there could be no failure. The two Georgians, however, were recklessly intent on staging a Bolshevik revolution in Georgia, quite unashamedly from the top down as in Azerbaijan, with no pretence at spontaneity. In practice this was the method adopted by Orjonikidze (who, as head of the Russian KP's Caucasian Bureau, wielded almost absolute power over 'Transcaucasia' on behalf of the Central Committee)[23] and Stalin, whose 'intense personal interest' in conquering Georgia arose from a 'desire to vindicate and avenge himself on Georgia's Mensheviks by returning in triumph as the victorious proconsul of the Soviet revolution…[like] the home-town boy who was or felt himself insulted making good'.[24]

While the eventual fate of the Republic of Georgia hung in the balance, further steps were taken to bring Armenia to heel. An anti-Bolshevik revolt had broken out on 15 February 1921, and two days later Armenian troops led by Vratsyan entered Yerevan to expel the Soviet Russian régime, and a second rebellion began in the Zangezur mountains. As the Armenians' request for Allied help produced no more than 'sympathy', they were even reduced to approaching the Turks in the hope of protection under the terms of the Treaty of Alexandropol. However, they gained nothing from Turkey's new Soviet-oriented Turkish dictatorship, and on 2 April the Red Army reimposed Bolshevik control over Armenia.[25] The chairman of the Armenian revolutionary committee was Sarkis Kasyan, whose closest colleagues in this and subsequent administrations included A. Bekzadyan, A. Erznkyan, A. Khanjyan, A. Miasnikyan, A. Mirzabekyan, L. Mirzoyan and S. Ter-Gabrielyan – all 'men in a hurry, almost completely inexperienced as administrators, and brutally insensitive to the weariness and desperation of the country they now governed…The agreement with the Dashnaks establishing a coalition government was disregarded, and many officials associated with the former government were arrested…[Thereafter] "war communism" was applied to

Armenia completely unsystematically and with great cruelty.'[26]

Georgia too had little chance in its war against Russia, and on 25 February 1921, after the fourth attempt, Russia's Red Army succeeded in occupying Tbilisi. The Georgian government moved to Batumi, where they held out for three weeks before being evacuated by ship on 17 March. The defence of Tbilisi, in which the Georgian army and Azerbaijani and North Caucasian troops of the Mountain Mejlis took part, continued for a few days, but on 25 February Red troops crushed the resistance, and the Georgian Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR) was proclaimed. Bolsheviks inundated the country, and the 'Georgian revolutionary committee' led by P. Makharadze assumed control. Behind his government stood the Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist Party, chaired by Orjonikidze. Many Georgian politicians were imprisoned, including P. Chichinadze, G. Georgadze, S. Jibladze, G. Lordkipanidze, G. Maziashvili and I. Ramishvili. In the elections to the Georgian Councils (Soviets) anyone disposed to opposition was deprived of a vote, in order to ensure a communist majority.[27] In March 1921, as the former Menshevik government of independent Georgia sailed for Istanbul and exile in Europe, and the British prime minister Lloyd George undertook not to oppose the Bolshevik insurgents anywhere in the former Russian Empire, the Moscow government, in the spirit of 'friendship' between Lenin and Mustafa Kemal, ceded to Turkey the districts of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki (the old Georgian region of Samtskhe-Saatabago).[28] Batumi and its hinterland of Acharia, however, remained in Georgia 'on condition that it retained its religious and cultural autonomy', i.e. Islam.[29]

Meanwhile two other territorial changes were made in Georgia which would have long-term repercussions:

> In 1921 on orders from Moscow, the Georgian Revolutionary Committee recognized the independence of Abkhazia…[and] proclaimed the creation of the Abkhazian SSR, bound to Georgia by a treaty between the two republics…[This] was absolutely illegal: it would have been sufficient for the protection of the interests of the Abkhazian people to give it the status of an autonomous republic within Georgia. Although, according to the treaty, Abkhazia remained part of Georgia, Soviet Russia's creation of an independent Abkhazian republic created a serious threat to the territorial integrity of Georgia.

In addition to this, according to the same 2001 Georgian source, 'the Georgian Revolutionary Committee – also…at Moscow's bidding, created the South Osetian Autonomous Province within Georgia's "Inner Kartli" region. As the absolute majority of inhabitants of this region were Georgians, the creation of this South Osetian republic here was totally unjustified.'[30]

One of the most contentious questions in South Caucasus which remained unresolved was the status of Armenian Karabagh and neighbouring regions. A British officer in Transcaucasia observed that Karabagh – the cradle of the Armenian people and 'Armenian in every particular' – meant more to the Armenians than even their religion,[31] and the tenacity with which their guerrillas continued to fight for it until late 1921 showed that this was scarcely an exaggeration. Although this was a complicated local matter, various temporary residents, such as Allied military officers and relief organizers, did not hesitate to adopt definite opinions and make expedient decisions, such as General V. Thomson's handing over Karabagh to Azerbaijan in 1919, or Colonel W. N. Haskell's declaration that Karabagh and Zangezur belonged to Azerbaijan, but that Nakhchavan and Sharur-Daralagöz should form a neutral zone between the Caucasus and Turkey.[32] The false principle behind such arbitrary decisions was that Armenia's historical claim to Karabagh were less valid than the stock assertion that economically this region formed 'an integral part of Azerbaijan'.[33] As soon as the Red Army occupied Azerbaijan in April 1920 the Baku communist government sent an ultimatum to the Armenian government to clear its troops out of Karabagh and Zangezur, and Turkey was mentioned, insanely, along with Azerbaijan and the RSFSR, as one of the 'liberators' of 'the workers of the East' from the 'British yoke'.

The Bolshevik annexation of the Armenian Republic in November 1920 initiated a period of improvization and prevarication by Bolshevik politicians on the subject of Karabagh and Nakhchavan. As constituted in November 1920 the Armenian SSR included southern Zangezur and all of Nakhchavan, but not Karabagh.[34] Narimanov of Azerbaijan had unexpectedly celebrated the foundation of the Armenian SSR by explicitly declaring that Zangezur and Nakhchavan should be allotted to Armenia,[35] and Stalin exceeded even this improbable generosity:

> Armenia, so long martyred and tormented…has now found salvation by proclaiming itself a Soviet land… On December 1, Soviet Azerbaijan voluntarily

> renounced its claim to the disputed provinces and ceded Zangezur, Nakhichevan and Nagorny Karabakh to Soviet Armenia…The age-old enmity between Armenia and the surrounding Moslem peoples has been dispelled at one stroke by the establishment of fraternal solidarity between the working people of Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan.[36]

Much prevarication and obstructionism remained ahead, as the ad hoc decisions of British and American observers were succeeded by arbitrary switches of policy on the part of the Bolshevik government. The ‘treaty’ finally concluded in December 1920 between Moscow and the Armenian Republic belied Stalin's words and the November formulation, by acknowledging Armenia's possession of southern Zangezur, but omitting Nakhchavan as well as Karabagh. Thus Armenian ‘Highland’ Karabagh was isolated from Armenia as an enclave within the Azerbaijan Republic. Deference to Mustafa Kemal also led to Lenin's agreement in January 1921 that Nakhchavan (which on its occupation by the Red Army in July 1920 had received the nominal status of a separate SSR) must be attached to Azerbaijan.[37]

Since Turkey's first overture to Azerbaijan in autumn 1919, Kemal and Lenin had formed a common front of collaboration against the West, which lasted until 1925. Although Tatar journalists chose to call Kemal a ‘Red commander’, in fact his convictions as a Turkish nationalist were far from Marxist; nevertheless it suited Lenin to give material support to his secular revolution in Turkey, just as it was convenient for Kemal Pasha to have a relatively free hand in stripping the Armenians of their Anatolian provinces, and an ally in his war against the Western Allies as they illadvisedly partitioned Turkey on the basis of war-time secret agreements. The Lenin--Kemalist alliance was formalized by a ‘Treaty of Friendship and Brotherhood’ in March 1921, later reinforced by a similar treaty between Turkey and ‘Soviet Ukraine’.[38] Meanwhile the establishment of the Crimean Tatar ASSR in October 1921 reflected Moscow's hopes of an upsurge of communism in Turkey, where Crimeans were conspicuous in the communist movement. By then, however, the Turkish communist Mustafa Subhi, a colleague of the Kazan Tatar socialist Sultan-ᶜAliyev appointed to consolidate Turkey's diverse communist groups into a single organization, had been killed by Turkish police. Kemal had formed his own puppet ‘Communist Party’ in 1920, but his flirtation with communism ended in 1925, when he had the Turkish CP dissolved and its leaders arrested; thereafter any ideas smacking of socialism were punishable under a law ‘borrowed from the penal code of Fascist Italy’.[39] By then, too, Turkey had become a haven for Tatar, Bashkort and Azerbaijani intellectuals fleeing from Lenin's régime.[40]

Muslim politics and Bolshevik dictatorship

After the February Revolution the Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire – among whom the Kazan Tatars maintained their acknowledged leadership – showed great initiative in creating bodies to represent their views, including in Petrograd, the Provisional Central Bureau for the Muslims of Russia, including mainly Duma representatives, chaired by the Osetian A. Tsalykatty; and in Kazan the Muslim Council led by Fuad Tuktarov. As about 960,000 Tatar and Bashkort soldiers were serving in the Russian army, those in Petrograd created a garrison Muslim Military Committee, while in Moscow a Muslim Military Council (Ḥarbi shura) was founded, as were similar bodies in Crimea, Orenburg, Ufa and Tashkent.

In the Caucasus Vladikavkaz was the venue for the first Congress of Muslim peoples of the region, held in May. In July 1917 another important conference took place in Moscow, where, on the initiative of the Tatar scholar A. Isḥaki, the First (post-February) All-Russian Muslim Congress assembled more than 800 delegates, with an agenda including national autonomy, land reform and Russia's future form as a unitary or federal state. The most contentious debate was about the status of Muslim women under *shariᶜah* law, which reflected the Koranic assertion that in status they were inferior to men. It was a great achievement for Tatar opinion that, against the concerted opposition of many male delegates from the unreformed Caucasus and Turkestan, the majority accepted that women and men had equal rights, women should not be secluded in the harem, men should commit themselves to monogamy, child marriage should be prohibited, and the right of divorce should become mutual. Another high point of Muslim political activity came in July with the concurrent sessions in Kazan of the Second Russian Muslim Congress, the Russian Muslim Military Congress, and a congress of mullahs. The Second Muslim Congress, which mainly attracted Tatar, Bashkort and Crimean delegates (but none from the Caucasus) issued a manifesto for the forthcoming All-Russian Constituent Assembly elections and, despite fierce opposition from the mullahs, it reiterated the view that Muslim women must participate on equal terms with men in the elections.[41] These resolutions became irrelevant three weeks later, when the Bolshevik coup occurred.[42] In any case the Provisional Government had given no encouragement whatever to requests for autonomy from non-Russian nationalities. All the important Russian political parties were against the federalization of the empire, and the Muslim communities experienced particular hostility because of Russian racial--religious prejudice, which met the slightest sign of Tatar self-assertion with references to the ‘enemies in our midst’ who ‘want to take us back to the days of Batu Khan’ (the thirteenth-century Mongol conqueror of Russia).[43]

The Bolshevik organization in Kazan, founded in March 1917, was almost exclusively Russian in its membership until the October coup.[44] When news of the Petrograd coup arrived the Tatar national organizations rejected Lenin's illegal government; Bolshevik and Tatar nationalist organizations then existed side by side in Kazan – most citizens patiently awaiting the inauguration of the Constituent Assembly in January. However, the Bolshevik Council (Soviet) now included some Tatar converts: in particular Sultan-^{c}Aliyev as commissar for nationalities and education.[45] Within the Volga--Ural region the Tatars and the Bashkorts disagreed about self-determination. Many Tatars, led by Isḥaki, believed in the ethnic unity of Bashkorts and Tatars and wanted a combined Tatar--Bashkort state; but many Bashkorts, led by Aḥmad Zaki Validi and Sharif Manatov, demanded a separate Bashkort state.

On 8 January 1918, two days after the second Bolshevik putsch closed the Petrograd Constituent Assembly, a Tatar--Bashkort commission, supported by the Muslim Military Congress, gathered in Kazan to plan their new state. This conflicted directly with the intentions of the Bolsheviks, so a Bolshevik revolutionary committee, including Sultan-^{c}Aliyev, declared martial law, and on 26 February arrested the leaders of the Muslim Military Congress. Thereupon many members of the latter gathered in the Tatar suburb of Kazan and, supported by much of the population and by Tatar troops, proclaimed an autonomous republic. Isolated from their compatriots, they withstood a month-long siege until on 28 March 1918 communist troops in armoured cars burst into the suburb and crushed their resistance.[46]

The Bashkorts' homeland lay to the east of the Volga in the south Ural provinces of Ufa and Orenburg. Here the anti-Bolshevik force was the Orenburg Cossack Host,[47] whose ataman, A. Dutov, declared himself the sole authority and introduced martial law. However, the Bolsheviks fomented strikes of railway workers, and Orenburg province became one of the main theatres of the Russian Civil War. In November 1917 the nationalist leaders Validi and Manatov assumed power in Orenburg, aiming to create an autonomous socialist Bashkortostan. When a Bolshevik army besieged Orenburg[48] the Bashkort population rejected Validi's nationalists and joined the Cossacks in repulsing Bolshevik attacks until January 1918, when the Bolsheviks occupied Orenburg. They ousted Validi's government, and in March 1919 a Bashkort Socialist Soviet Republic was created.[49] In June 1920 the Bashkort nationalist leaders left Bashkortostan. Validi moved to Turkestan, where for the next two years he collaborated with Enver Pasha and other 'pan-Turanian' romantics from Turkey in the 'Basmachi' rebellion. When this failed he moved to western Europe, where he taught Islamic history in German and Turkish universities and died in Istanbul in 1970.[50]

The Tatar Bolshevik Mirsaid Sultan-^{c}Aliyev (1892–1939) dominated Muslim political life in Soviet Russia for a decade after 1917. The son of a village teacher ('the poorest of the poor'), Mirsaid gained a scholarship to the teachers' seminary in Kazan, where in 1913 he joined a 'Tatar socialist fighting organization', to oppose the latest government

Russification and conversion campaign. Thereafter he moved to Baku, where he combined teaching with journalism until the February Revolution brought him back to Kazan, where he worked in Muslim socialist organizations, but was not accepted by the exclusively Russian Bolsheviks until he established a cell in the Tatar Military Council and obtained the support of Tatar military units for the October coup.[51] In 1918 the communists created a Central Muslim Military Board (CMMB), which was chaired from September 1918 by Sultan-ᶜAliyev. To demonstrate that the Tatars possessed genuine autonomy, he considered it essential to create full-scale Red Army Muslim units[52] but, from the Bolsheviks' 'internationalist' viewpoint, the formation of ethnic (particularly Muslim) armies was anathema,[53] as were, indeed, the national aspirations of Muslims in general – as Sultan-ᶜAliyev discovered during his encounters with Russo-communist evasion, secrecy and perfidy. Even as he busied himself in Kazan with the formation of the Central Muslim Military Board, in Moscow its abolition was being recommended to the Bolshevik high command. Sultan-ᶜAliyev protested to Lenin in February 1919, supporting his insistence on the CMMB and the formation of Muslim units with the reminder that almost 50% of Red Army troops then fighting on the eastern front were Muslims, and he succeeded in obtaining a stay of execution for his plan.[54]

Sultan-ᶜAliyev also developed his own ideas about 'world revolution' in relation to the peoples of Asia, and his international standing was greatly increased by his journalism, in which he expressed his view of Muslims as the poorest and most oppressed of all the world's peoples, and the position that, as a whole, 'The Muslim countries are proletarian peoples.'[55] In July 1918 he addressed to 'the

Muslim proletariat' a naive but impassioned challenge: 'To arms! For the defence of the young Tatar--Bashkort SSR against the invasion by Czechoslovaks and White-Guardists…For the overthrow of Anglo-French imperialism, which rules over millions of the Muslim proletariat of the Orient and India!'[56] Such apocalyptic views were popular at that time, and its key concepts – forces of good and evil, 'the final decisive battle' and the worn-out 'old world' – were already clichés.

Sultan-^{c}Aliyev's audacity was not in this call to world revolution but in daring to assert that it should not be expected to happen in Europe. Instead, 'our attention should be directed primarily to the east', and the peoples of Tatarstan, Turkestan and the Caucasus must be armed and united and 'sent…into Turkey, the Arab countries and India, to liberate them from west European capital' – after which the workers of Britain, France and so forth would overthrow their own 'bourgeoisie'.[57] Even for Russia's Bolshevik government (which was now keen to conclude trade agreements with capitalist countries) such unauthorized proposals to make war throughout Asia were diplomatically troublesome. To socialists in Asian countries, who had taken an interest in Russian Marxism since 1905, Sultan-^{c}Aliyev's ideas were, however, very exciting. Many visited Moscow in the 1920s for congresses of the Communist International, and some to attend the Communist University of Workers of the East, where Sultan-^{c}Aliyev was among the lecturers. Thus his ideas became known among socialists from India to Algeria, and played a significant part in the development of communist movements in colonial countries.[58]

Sultan-^{c}Aliyev's message displeased the communists, who saw the world exclusively in terms of Marxist dogmas as expounded by Lenin.[59] Consequently, in August 1919 when the KP Central Committee resolved to appoint Sultan-^{c}Aliyev as chairman of the Kazan Executive Committee, this order was countermanded by Stalin, and he was appointed to a post in Moscow, to remove him from involvement in Tatar politics.[60] Stalin's aim now was to reduce Kazan's status as the political and intellectual centre of Russia's Muslim peoples.[61] The decree establishing the Kazan Executive Committee, however, explicitly stated that Sultan-^{c}Aliyev – the obvious choice to head the Tatar ASSR's administration – must remain in Moscow.[62] A further blow to Tatarstan's primacy among Russia's Muslim peoples was Stalin's decision that the Congress of Peoples of the East in September 1920 would be held not in Kazan, but in Baku. Sultan-^{c}Aliyev, who would have been fêted for his call for a *jihad* against 'British imperialism', was prevented from attending, and in his absence Communist International delegates obtained a vote rejecting his thesis that oriental peoples were essentially proletarian peoples.[63]

In October 1920 Sultan-^{c}Aliyev's passionate insistence on the necessity of genuine autonomy for non-Russian republics, not just a pretence, led to a direct clash with Stalin.[64] Vindictively, Stalin attempted to have him removed from the Commissariat for Nationalities and exiled. Sultan-^{c}Aliyev refused to submit,and in 1922–3 he dismissed as 'a mockery of independence' Stalin's plan for a hierarchy of national territories subordinating autonomous provinces and republics to union republics, and the latter to Moscow's 'central' government – i.e. the much celebrated 'formation of the USSR'. Calling one of Stalin's proposals a 'muddle' which would simply increase 'the trend towards Russian chauvinism', he restated Lenin's distinction between aggressive 'big-nation' nationalism and defensive 'small-nation' nationalism: 'If local nationalism manifests itself as active resistance to…great-power chauvinism, this is not nationalism, but simply a struggle against great-power [i.e. Russian] chauvinism.'[65]

Stalin's malice towards Sultan-ᶜAliyev became intense, and only the survival of Lenin provided some protection. But from March 1923, when Lenin suffered a stroke, he could be largely disregarded, and Stalin removed Sultan-ᶜAliyev from the political scene. He was expelled from the Communist Party on trumped-up charges as an 'anti-party, anti-Soviet' element. The shadow of his political 'mistakes' also hung over many of his associates, who were 'purged' from the KPSS for supposed participation in a non-existent conspiracy against the Soviet state,[66] and many were shot as 'enemies of the people'. From 1928 'Sultangaliyevism' was used as a damning heresy to condemn any Muslim whom Stalin's secret police wished to destroy. Books and articles on the imaginary conspiracy poured out, and a hunt for conspirators spread through all Muslim regions in the USSR. When Sultan-ᶜAliyev was arrested in December 1929, more than 2,000 supposed accomplices were arrested, 21 of whom were condemned to death, including Sultan-ᶜAliyev himself, but his execution was postponed. In 1931 he was incarcerated in the White Sea Solovki prison for three years, and in 1937 he was further interrogated with torture in Kazan.[67] In 1939, with Lavrentiy Beria already in command of the USSR's organs of repression, Sultan-ᶜAliyev was again condemned to death; he was taken to Moscow and shot in 1940, 17 years after his victimization by Stalin began.[68]

Russian nationalist communists and Muslims

Sultan-ᶜAliyev's destruction and the ousting of Kazan by Baku as the centre of Muslim politics in the former Russian Empire, the downgrading of the Volga--Ural Tatars and Bashkorts and elevation of the Azerbaijanis, made no sense except in terms of suppression of freedom of speech and thought. One of the prejudices against non-Russian autonomy expressed by the numerous communists who were also Russian chauvinists was the colonialist argument that the non-Russian natives were ‘immature’ and ‘unreliable’ and not ready to govern themselves. It has been suggested that, for instance, the Bashkorts’ incomprehension of ‘Leninist organizational mentality’ can be explained by their unfamiliarity with ‘new and sophisticated European forms of political organization’.[69] However, few régimes in the twentieth century were as unsophisticated as the Soviet communists in their simultaneous naive belief in a utopian political theory and their brutal disregard for human rights and honourable behaviour in attaining the ends they conceived for themselves and the whole world. The Muslim Bashkort Validi was shocked by Lenin's cool dismissal of moral principle in favour of expediency in the question of a 1920 agreement on the rights of the Bashkir ASSR: a treaty was simply a piece of paper, and the traditional ‘word of honour’ was stupidity unworthy of a revolutionary.[70] The point was not lack of sophistication, but that Bashkort, Tatar and other politicians were like babes in the hands of men so fanatically narrow-minded as Lenin, Trotskiy and Stalin.

North Caucasus, 1920–1922

In 1920–1 the third North Caucasus insurrection – this time not against the Whites but the Soviets – affected the whole of North Caucasus and Daghestan. In opposition to the Russian threat to North Caucasus, the indigenous North Caucasus Defence Council had been formed in 1919, when the Socialist Group returned to Daghestan from Baku with plans to create a North Caucasus Communist Party separate from the Moscow party, in Sultan-^{c}Aliyev's spirit of 'national communism'. Forestalling the Red Army by moving into Petrovsk on the departure of the Whites March 1920, the Defence Council became the provisional government of North Caucasus, dedicated to achieving independence in 'the spirit of *shari^{c}ah* and revolution'. This did not last long, as the Bolsheviks expelled all 'national communists' from the Defence Council and renamed it the Daghestan Revolutionary Committee.

They intended to bribe the North Caucasians to accept the Russian communist régime by offering money and food and by creating supposedly representative 'native' sections in the local revolutionary committees. In accordance with Bolshevik practice for 'raising the cultural level of the masses', sections were also created for ideological work among women and teenagers. Despite such measures, the Bolsheviks failed to make themselves popular in North Caucasus because, with their standard practice of compulsory requisitioning of food[71] and their oppression of the native intelligentsia, 'the commissars…and soldiers…behaved as though they were in a conquered enemy country'.[72] Heydar Bammat's protest in the name of the Mountain Mejlis in Tbilisi against the Soviet Russian occupation of Daghestan evoked nothing but stock vilification against 'the Caucasian bourgeoisie and nobility'.[73] Surprisingly, however, Islam gained a temporary reprieve from direct persecution on the advice of Sultan-ᶜAliyev, who placed the North Caucasus Muslims second only to those of Turkestan in their Islamic fervour and resistance to anti-religious propaganda: 'The memory of the imamate of Shamil was still alive; attachment to *ᶜadat*, the body of unwritten law, and to Muslim legislation, was firm; the use of classical Arabic was widespread; the warlike highlanders were fiercely jealous of their individuality.'[74] As Sultan-ᶜAliyev observed, 'During the Civil War…whole mountain communities…fought against Bicherakhov and Denikin on the Soviet side for purely religious reasons: they said Soviet power gave more freedom to our religion than the Whites did. In the Caucasian Red Army there were whole "*shariᶜah*" units of mountaineers…[those] of the Kabardan mullah Katkakhanov eventually numbered several tens of thousands.'[75]

Meanwhile on the Kuban a Council for the Defence of the Karachay was formed in September 1920 by the mullah Tokal-Hajji Karaket and the horse-breeder Kekkez Uzdenov. The military leaders of its anti-Bolshevik 'North Caucasus Front', the Adygey general Kelech-Girey and the Karachay colonel Krymshamkhalov, recruited a volunteer force and advanced on Batalpashinsk in parallel with remnants of the White army. However, Orjonikidze hurriedly organized an army which defeated the native defence force in October, and 'Soviet power' was reimposed.[76]

The response to Bolshevik occupation in Chechenia was a national gathering at Tsonteri on 6 May 1920 at which independence was declared, in the face of the Bolshevik assertion that the mountain peoples 'lacked the maturity' to 'receive' independence. After an oath was sworn by all present, a National Congress was elected, all of whose members in turn swore on the Koran, a sabre and dagger ‘to defend the free and independent government of the Islamic Republic’. The dedication of the Chechens to their national cause was strengthened by their adherence to the Sufi brotherhood of Kunta Hajji (Qadiriya), which had also been a powerful influence in Ingushia since the nineteenth century.[77]

The fiercest and most prolonged resistance to the communist invaders gathered force in Chechenia and Daghestan in August 1920, when a ‘Shari^{c}ah Army’ was assembled by Imam Najmuddin and Colonel Alikhanov at Gidatl in Avaristan. Their immediate reason for action was hunger, since the Bolsheviks, enforcing only their own programme of food-requisitioning, would not supply the needs of the population.[78] An agreement had been reached in 1919 between the Bolsheviks and the Chechen leader ^{c}Ali Mitayev of Avtura, head of the Bammat Girey brotherhood, that the latter would join in the war against Denikin on the Bolshevik side if the Chechens were allowed to base their autonomy on a combination of communism and *shari^{c}ah*. In 1920, while the Bolshevik war against Imam Najmuddin continued, Mitayev became the leader of the Chechen revolutionary committee, although some suspected that his forces collaborated with the communists. The insurgents numbered no more than 9,700 warriors, chiefly Avars and Chechens, united by a double loyalty to the cause of national liberation in the spirit of Shamil, and their membership of a Sufi brotherhood, which in Avaristan was chiefly Naqshbandiya, and they had at their head one of Shamil's great-grandsons, Said-Bek, who had returned to Daghestan from exile in Turkey.[79] In the early stages of the war the Daghestanis and Chechens, almost impregnable in their mountainous region, gained some remarkable victories, reminiscent of their nineteenth-century exploits. In October 1920 they annihilated a whole Bolshevik division in the Arakan gorge near Khunzakh, and on 30 November an ostensibly formidable ‘Model Revolutionary-Discipline Rifle Regiment’ suffered the same fate. Other Muslim bands liberated Gotsatl and besieged Khunzakh and Shamil's stronghold, Gunib.

On the other hand, not all Muslims, even in upper Chechenia and Daghestan, supported the Shari^{c}ah Army. One group of the Andi, for instance, joined by numerous lowlanders, mostly Kumyks, helped the communists by forming guerrilla groups, which were instrumental in relieving the siege of Khunzakh. So crucial to the Bolsheviks was victory in Chechenia--Daghestan that Stalin travelled to Vladikavkaz to address a congress of North Caucasus Bolshevik sympathizers, and promised them autonomy in their own territories. Indeed, in the middle of the war the Bolshevik government established in January 1921 both the Daghestan and the Mountain (Russian ‘Gorskaya’) Autonomous Soviet Republics, in which the *shari^{c}ah* and *^{c}adat* were granted (temporarily!) official status. The Mountain Republic embraced Chechenia, Ingushia, Osetia, Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachay, but excluded the Cherkes and Abaza, while Daghestan and Chechenia, which had strong religious and historical bonds and formed a territorial bloc east of Vladikavkaz, were separate. At first these two republics were administered by Military Revolutionary Committees, and the leadership in Daghestan included such Bolshevik veterans as Muhammad Dalgat, Jalaladdin Korkmasov, Karim Mamedbekov, Najmuddin Samurskiy and ^{c}Ali Akbar Takho-Godi.[80]

Denied an easy conquest, the Red Army made up for its underestimation of the native forces by bringing up huge reinforcements, including artillery, to subdue the poorly armed, but highly mobile and resourceful people's army of the Mountain Republic, which inflicted heavy losses on the Russians during the first half of 1921 (an 'élite' regiment of the Moscow Cadet Brigade was surrounded and massacred in upper Chechenia on 21 January). By then, however, the tables were turning. The Muslims' heroic defence of Gergebil was worn down by a three-week long assault, and Gunib too fell to the communists. In February merciless pounding by the Red Army, with its armoured vehicles, air reconnaissance and artillery, resulted in the capture of Arakan, Gimri and other villages, and by March the Shari^{c}ah Army was hemmed in in the mountainous west of Daghestan and southern Chechenia. Meanwhile the Bolshevik invasion of Georgia brought the Red Army up the Military Highway to threaten Daghestan from the east as well. While the Russians claimed that the war was over, a few hundred survivors of the Shari^{c}ah Army under Imam Najmuddin and Colonel Jafarov were still making a determined stand at Gidatl. The full force of the Red Army was directed against this village during May until it fell, leaving few survivors. Even this was not the end of the Daghestan--Chechen liberation war, which went on smouldering until 1925. Najmuddin went into hiding in the mountains until 1924, when he surrendered and was shot along with two Naqshbandi sheykhs, but Said-Bek, like General Kelech-Girey in Circassia, succeeded in escaping to Turkey.[81]

The effects of two years of almost continuous warfare in Daghestan – in any case a poor land – were devastating. The disruption of normal links between the mountain communities and the Chechen lowlands deprived Daghestan of its source of grain, while Red Army troops billeted throughout the country stole food with their usual ruthlessness. The first communist chairman of the Daghestan ASSR, the Lezgi Najmuddin Samurskiy, reported to Orjonikidze:

> The population of the mountain districts is literally reduced to nakedness. In the Dargo and Andi districts they have decreed that men must all stay indoors until midday, so that the women who have no clothes can go for water and work outside…There are no shrouds for burying Muslims. Bodies for burial are coated with clay, or else the nearest relative gives up his last garment…In order to clothe their naked families the mountaineers sell the last of their livestock and possessions. Profiteering on this account has reached enormous proportions.[82]

To add to these hardships, North Caucasus was one of the regions of Soviet Russia that suffered most in the 1921–2 famine.[83]

Not all parts of Daghestan were involved equally in the 1920–1 anti-Soviet war: 'The Bolsheviks…succeeded in rousing the opposition of the Kumyks…Darghins and…Lezghins to the Avars, and the rebellion did not spread to central and southern Daghestan.'[84] The largely Kumyk coastal lowlands remained aloof, as did the 'Lezgians' of the south (Tabasarans, Aguls, Rutuls and Tsakhurs, along with the more numerous Lezgis proper). The Lezgis' situation illustrates the equal arbitrariness of Russian ethnic policy before and after the revolution. They lived both north and south of the Samur, whose lower course forms the present-day frontier between Daghestan and Azerbaijan, just as it formed the border between Daghestan and Baku provinces in 1860–1917. In 1920–1, when the Azerbaijan SSR and Daghestan ASSR were formed,[85] this division of the Lezgis was left unchanged, although the similar division of the Kumyks between northern Daghestan and Terek province was rectified in 1920 by the transfer of Khasavyurt region to Daghestan. As a Lezgi writer explains:

> Until the 1930s Russia was in a state of chaos, which Turkey eagerly exploited…not only creating in 1918 the pro-Turkish republic of Azerbaijan, but also influencing developments in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In 1922 the [Union] of Transcaucasian Soviet Republics was created, with the Turk Nariman Narimanov as its leader. Later he became one of the co-chairmen of the USSR Central Committee…In these circumstances, naturally, it was not easy for N. Samurskiy [the Lezgi chairman of Daghestan's Central Executive Committee] to resolve the problem of reuniting the Lezgis.[86]

While Turkish nationalism was the reason for Azerbaijan's ignoring the Lezgis’ desire for national unification, the status quo also suited the Russians. Various earlier proposals to unite Daghestan as a whole with Azerbaijan had come to nothing, no doubt because this would have threatened Russia's southern borders with a unified Muslim region embracing the formerly Persian lands of the Caucasus. On the other hand, it was not expedient for Russia to see justice done for the Lezgis at the price of antagonizing Azerbaijan by curtailing its north-eastern region – the old Khanate of

Kuba. This was one of many ethnic causes for dissatisfaction in the Caucasus which were suppressed under the Soviet régime, and thereby postponed until a later date.

Despite the continuation of fighting in many parts of North Caucasus, as soon as the Bolsheviks felt assured of their military victory they proceeded, as in ‘Transcaucasia’, to set up territorial units for the non-Russian peoples. In the first instance two of these were formed in 1921: the Daghestan ASSR with Port Petrovsk as its centre, and the Mountain ASSR, based on Vladikavkaz. However, Moscow's intention was that autonomy would be nominal, and from the start it asserted its authority over the region through its South-Eastern Bureau, based in Rostov-on-Don. More immediately, KPSS influence was exerted through the towns, which formed Russian enclaves within the indigenous rural territories: Krasnodar (until 1920 Yekaterinodar) dominated the Adygeys and Circassians; Pyatigorsk, Stavropol and Nalchik controlled the Kabardans and Karachays; Vladikavkaz oversaw the Osetians and Ingush; and Groznyy would dominate the Chechens.

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[1] Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, pp. 17–18; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 82–5, 88; Kakagasanov and Musayev, ‘Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki’, p. 33; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 243–4; Kosok, ‘Revolution and sovietization’, [pt. 2], p. 53; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 153; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 107–14, 118, 206, 208–9.

[2] Brinkley, *Volunteer Army*, p. 174; M. B. Broxup, ‘The last *ghazawat*: the 1920–1921 uprising’, in M. B. Broxup, ed., *The North Caucasus Barrier: the Russian Advance towards the Muslim World*, London, 1992, p. 115; *Istoriya Dagestana*,

vol. III, pp. 87–90; Kakagasanov and Musayev, 'Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki', p. 33; M. Z. Mahomedov, 'Pochemu', pp. 48, 49; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 109–10, 112, 115–16.

[3] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 18–19; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 249, 258; Ivanov, ed., 'Gorskaya kontrrevolyutsiya', *Krasnyy arkhiv*, pp. 143–4; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 92–8; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 112–14, 116, 118–20.

[4] V. Apukhtin, quoted in M. Z. Mahomedov, 'Pochemu', pp. 49, 51–2.

[5] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 18–19. 'Kulak' is Russian for a 'fist' or prosperous peasant.

[6] Quoted in *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 94–5.

[7] *Ibid*., vol. III, pp. 94, 96–7.

[8] Colonel Rowlandson, [letter to representatives of the Ingush, Chechens and Daghestanis], quoted in M. Z. Mahomedov, 'Pochemu', p. 51. See also *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 76–7.

[9] A. Avtorkhanov, 'The Chechens and the Ingush during the Soviet period and its antecedents', in Broxup, ed., *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. 153; Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 19.

[10] M. Z. Mahomedov, 'Pochemu', pp. 49–50; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 366.

[11] M. Z. Mahomedov, ‘Pochemu’, pp. 50–2; ‘Otnosheniye Vizira S[evernogo]-K[avkazskogo] Emirstva k Gruzii’, in Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 225–9.

[12] Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, pp. 19–20; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 141, 260–1, 288, 325, 327; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 303; M. Z. Mahomedov, ‘Pochemu’, pp. 49–50; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 65–6, 75–6; Natirboff, ‘Circassians’ part’, pp. 143–4; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 159–60, 166, 173, 198.

[13] The text quoted is the present author's conflation of versions given in: Bammat, ‘The Caucasus and the Russian Revolution’, pp. 20–1; H. Bammat, *Le Caucase et la révolution russe*, Paris, 1929, quoted in Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 23; and Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, p. 249.

[14] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, 153; Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 115, 121--2; Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, pp. 20, 23; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, pp. 169, 287–8, 284–6; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 109; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 30–6; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 66; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 166.

[15] Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, pp. 17, 21; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 86; Kakagasanov and Musayev, ‘Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki’, p. 33; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 205–7, 221, 231–2, 247–8; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 166; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 105–6.

[16] Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 221–2, 224–5; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 207–10, 218–19, 221, 273–4,

276–9, 281–2, 295–6; Mawdsley, *Russian Civil War*, p. 228; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VII, p. 612.

[17] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 110–11, 121, 134, 142–3, 146, 165; Butbay, *Vospominaniya*, p. 61; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 283–5, 296–7, 300; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, pp. 96, 99, 178, 355, 859, 1583; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 168, 177, 180–3, 188–90, 250.

[18] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 219–20, 286.

[19] *Ibid*., pp. 210, 296–300; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 225–6; Suny, *Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 206.

[20] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 301–21, 307–9, 316–17; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 227.

[21] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 264–5, 287–93; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 229.

[22] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, p. 499n.; Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 122–3; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 201–3, 275, 302–5, 307, 309–13, 317–20, 323–5; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 219, 223, 229–30, 232–5.

[23] S. Blank, ‘The Soviet conquest of Georgia’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1993, 12, 1, pp. 35–6, 40–1; S. Blank, ‘The Transcaucasian Federation and the origins of the Soviet Union, 1921–1922’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1990, 9, 4, p. 29; Suny, *Making*, pp. 206–7, 210–12.

[24] Blank, ‘Soviet conquest of Georgia’, pp. 33, 34; see also Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. 93–5, 98–101.

[25] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 320–5, 328; B. Levytskyy, *The Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press*, Stanford, 1974, pp. 275–9, 382–6; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 294, 303–4; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, pp. 821, 1335, 1459.

[26] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 139.

[27] Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 122–3, 125–6.

[28] Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 234–6.

[29] Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 127; see also Bammat, ‘Caucasus and the Russian Revolution’, p. 25; Blank, ‘Transcaucasian Federation’, p. 33; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 320, 326–8; Levytskyy, *Stalinist Terror*, pp. 225–8, 285–6, 313, 324, 436; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 735; Suny, *Making*, pp. 207, 209, 234, 252.

[30] Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 127.

[31] Col. J. C. Plowden, quoted by Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, vol. II, p. 87.

[32] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 102; Guliyev, *K istorii obrazovaniya Nagorno-Karabakhskoy*, pp. 25–7.

[33] Guliyev, *K istorii obrazovaniya Nagorno-Karabakhskoy*, pp. 5–7, 58, 136, etc.

[34] Yu. A. Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana posle okonchaniya Grazhdanskoy voyny: territoriya i naseleniye*, Moscow, 1986, pp. 67–8.

[35] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 116; Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 291–2.

[36] I. V. Stalin, 'Long live Soviet Armenia!', *Pravda*, 4 December 1920, in his *Sochineniya*, Moscow, 1953, vol. IV, pp. 426–7.

[37] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 116–17; Guliyev, *K istorii obrazovaniya Nagorno-Karabakhskoy*, pp. 42–3, 44–5, 99; Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, pp. 67–8 n. 159.

[38] C. W. Hostler, *Turkism and the Soviets: the Turks of the World and Their Political Objectives*, London, 1957, pp. 168–9; Hotham, *The Turks*, pp. 91, 113–14; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 245–6, n. 12; *Kratkaya istoriya SSSR*, vol. II, p. 184; S. R. Sonyel, *Turkish Diplomacy 1918–1923: Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish National Movement*, London, 1975, pp. 1–3, 39–65.

[39] Hotham, *The Turks*, pp. 86, 93–4; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 78; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, pp. 110–17, 347.

[40] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, p. 16 n. 3; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 245–6 n. 12; Validov, *Ocherk*, pp. 169, 176, 194, 210, 211.

[41] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 112–28; Dimanshteyn, *Revolyutsiya i natsionalnyy vopros*, pp. 307–9, 315–20; *Programs of the Muslim Political Parties*, p. 34.

[42] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 122–8.

[43] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 66–7; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 176, 181, 192; Litvin, *Kazan*, p. 169; Sultangaliyev, ‘Klevetnikam’, in his *Statyi*, pp. 44–6.

[44] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 59–61; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 58–61, 77, 116, 129–30; Isḥaki, *Idel-Ural*, p. 55. Sultan-^{c}Aliyev is spelt in Russian ‘Sultangaliyev’.

[45] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 120–1, 131–5, 153; S. A. Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia*, Cambridge, MA, 1960, p. 165.

[46] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 161–2; Litvin, *Kazan*, pp. 43–9; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, p. 318.

[47] Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 18.

[48] M. S. Bernshtam, *Narodnoye soprotivleniye kommunizmu v Rossii: Ural i Prikamye, noyabr 1917–yanvar 1919: dokumenty i materialy*, Paris, 1982, pp. 150, 180–4, 190, 212, 227; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 55, 65–6, 73, 80.

[49] Akademiya Nauk SSSR, Bashkirskiy filial, *Podgotovka i provedeniye Velikoy Oktyabrskoy Sotsialisticheskoy*

Revolyutsii v Bashkirii: sbornik dokumentov i materialov, edited by S. A. Amineva, R. G. Kuzeyeva and V. P. Chemeris, Ufa, 1957, pp. 336–8, 468, n. 163.

[50] S. Blank, 'The struggle for Soviet Bashkiria 1917–1923', *Nationalities Papers*, 1983, 11, 1, pp. 1–26; O. Caroe, *Soviet Empire: the Turks of Central Asia and Stalinism*, London, 1953, pp. 122–30; Hostler, *Turkism and the Soviets*, pp. 171–89; H. B. Paksoy, 'The Basmachi movement from within: an account of Zeki Velidi Togan', *Nationalities Papers*, 1995, 23, 2, pp. 373, 386–96; Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism*, pp. 206–8.

[51] Sultangaliyev, 'Kto zhe ya?', in his *Statyi*, pp. 389–93, 396, 399, 401–2, 407–17.

[52] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 141, 163, 160–3, 167; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 132–5; S. V. Starikov, 'Kazanskiye levye esery i prodovolstvennyy vopros (mart 1917–iyul 1918 gg.)', *Mariyskiy arkheograficheskiy vestnik*, 1995, no. 5, p. 52; Sultangaliyev, proclamations and decrees of the Kazan Revolutionary Headquarters concerning the formation of the 'Bulak republic', February 1918, in his *Statyi*, pp. 240–4; Sultangaliyev, speeches, January--February 1918, in his *Statyi*, pp. 174–5; Sultangaliyev, 'Report of the chairman of the Central Muslim Military Bureau…to the vice-chairman of the Republican Revolutionary Military Council…on the activities of the bureau in 1918', in his *Statyi*, p. 274; Sultangaliyev, 'Kto zhe ya', pp. 419–23.

[53] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 135.

[54] *Ibid*., p. 135; Sultangaliyev, 'Letter…to the Republican Defence Council chairman V. I. Lenin…', in *Statyi*, pp. 278–

91.

[55] Sultangaliyev, ‘Letter to the editors [of the Tatar newspaper *Koyash*, December 1917]’, and speech at the provincial Congress of Soviets of the Volga and Southern Urals, February 1918, in his *Statyi*, pp. 48, 176.

[56] Sultangaliyev, ‘Musulmane, k oruzhiyu!’, in his *Statyi*, p. 72, and ‘Sotsialnaya revolyutsiya i Vostok’, in his *Statyi*, p. 88.

[57] Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 169–70; Sultangaliyev, ‘Nash put – pryamoy’, ‘Sotsialnaya revolyutsiya i Vostok’ and ‘Na Vostok!’, all in his *Statyi*, pp. 85–99.

[58] P. Dukes, *October and the World: Perspectives on the Russian Revolution*, London, 1979, pp. 149, 158, 162. For Asians who echoed Sultangaliyev's ideas, see Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 245 n. 3, and A. A. Bennigsen and S. E. Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: a Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World*, Chicago, 1979, pp. 108–16, whose authors concede that it is difficult to prove Sultan-^{c}Aliyev's direct influence on foreign communist leaders.

[59] As Marx's scriptures said nothing about capitalism imported from an imperial metropolis into colonial peasant societies, these ideas automatically put Sultan-^{c}Aliyev into the category of ‘deviationists’ – heretics whom Russia's Communist Party would not tolerate.

[60] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 137; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, p. 13.

[61] When the Tatar ASSR was established in May 1920 Kazan was not named as its capital until Lenin protested, and it was confirmed that the newly founded republic's capital was to be Kazan: Litvin, *Kazan*, pp. 167–9; Pipes, *Formation*, p. 170.

[62] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 180, 182–4, 193; D. E. Schafer, 'The politics of national equality under early NEP: factions in the Tatar Republic 1920–1924', *Central Asian Survey*, 1990, 9, 2, pp. 59–60.

[63] E. J. Lazzerini, 'Congress of Peoples of the East', in *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, vol. VIII, pp. 1–3; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 147.

[64] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 135; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, pp. 13–14.

[65] Sh. Muhamedyarov and B. Sultanbekov, 'Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev: his character and fate', *Central Asian Survey*, 1990, 9, 2, pp. 113–15; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, pp. 228–9, 231–5, 348–9.

[66] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism*, pp. 84–5; Blank, 'Struggle for Soviet Bashkiria', pp. 24–5; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 194–5; Muhamedyarov and Sultanbekov, 'Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev', p. 114; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 260–2; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, pp. 11, 16–17, 323–40, 373–4, 379–86.

[67] In Tatarstan, Communist Party Terror claimed over 42,000 victims. On 1 January 1939, among the 1.3 million inmates of Soviet prison camps there were 25,000 Tatars and 5,000 Bashkirs. Statistics of those summarily shot in Kazan prison

were as appalling as in every other part of the Soviet Union. For instance, in 1937 a total of 481 executions in five days; in 1938 in one day (6 January) 202 'enemies of the people' shot, and so on: A. L. Litvin, *Zapret na zhizn*, Kazan, 1993, pp. 20–1, 40. This book was written in memoriam of Litvin's father, a cobbler, who, for no crime, spent seven years in slavery at an Arctic mercury-mining prison camp and five in exile, as a result of 'the Bolshevik experiment and the monstrous régime of repression of individuality, social hypocrisy and pitiless violence which it created': pp. 3, 217–23.

[68] Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 197–8; Muhamedyarov and Sultanbekov, 'Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev', pp. 114–15; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, pp. 148, 246; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, p. 23.

[69] Blank, 'Struggle for Soviet Bashkiria', p. 15.

[70] A. Z. Validov, *Bugünkü Türkili ve yakyn tarihi*, Istanbul, 1942–7, translated into English as *Turkestan Today*, p. 37, quoted in Blank, 'Struggle for Soviet Bashkiria', pp. 13–14.

[71] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 21–3; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 103–6; Broxup, 'Last *ghazawat*', p. 122; *Kratkaya istoriya SSSR*, vol. II, p. 167; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 68–71; Takho-Godi, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 142–3.

[72] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 23.

[73] Bammat, 'Caucasus and the Russian Revolution', pp. 22–3.

[74] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 141–3; Sultangaliyev, ‘Metody antireligioznoy propagandy sredi musulman’, in his *Statyi*, pp. 134–6, 139.

[75] Sultangaliyev, ‘Metody antireligioznoy propagandy’, pp. 148–9.

[76] Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 24; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 76–8.

[77] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 161–2; Butbay, *Vospominaniya*, pp. 42–4, 58–9; Broxup, ‘Last *ghazawat*’, pp. 118–19.

[78] *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 123.

[79] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, p. 511; Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 99–100; Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 21; Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, pp. 6, 16 n. 3; Broxup, ‘Last *ghazawat*’, pp. 112, 114, 121–4.

[80] A. Agayev, ‘Bezzakoniya 30-kh godov: istoki, mekhazmy, posledstviya’, *Sovetskiy Dagestan*, 1988, no. 2, pp. 19–28; review in *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1988–9, 7, 5–6, pp. 9–11; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. II, pp. 231, 255, 293; vol. III, pp. 13, 50, 56, 72, 106, 135, 139–40, 222, 272, 299; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 765; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki istorii Checheno-Ingushskoy ASSR*, vol. II, p. 87.

[81] Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, pp. 511, 514–19, 521–6; Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, p. 154; Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, pp. 24–6; Broxup, ‘Last

ghazawat', pp. 112, 114, 121, 123–41; F. E. B. Bryan, 'Internationalism, nationalism and Islam', in Broxup, ed., *North Caucasus Barrier*, pp. 209, 218 n. 40; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 82–3; Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, pp. 56–7.

[82] N. Samurskiy, [letter to Orjonikidze, c. 1920], in Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya – Lezgistan*, p. 278.

[83] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. XXX, col. 417; Broxup, 'Last *ghazawat*', p. 143.

[84] Bennigsen, 'Muslim guerrilla warfare', p. 53.

[85] Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, p. 56.

[86] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya* -- Lezgistan, pp. 288–9; for this author, a Lezgi, 'Turk' is a pejorative, especially when applied to Azerbaijanis.

13 The North and South Caucasus peoples, 1920–1939

Ethnic, religious and cultural institutions

From 1917 onward all religions in the Russian Empire suffered persecution as a matter of Communist Party policy. This alienated Christian communities in the Caucasus from the Russians, although the Russian Orthodox Church was also severely persecuted. All religious groups practised some covert activity, about which it was difficult to obtain information, especially concerning Islam. The Caucasus was still essentially a colony, in which Russians were widely perceived as an alien, imperial presence unwelcome to the native inhabitants, however sincerely the latter might respect aspects of Russian culture. On the other hand, the indigenous peoples' political allegiance was influenced by awareness of their frontiers with Turkey and Iran, on which Moscow maintained especially tight control and surveillance.

A new policy which at first raised the expectations of non-Russians was 'nativization' or 'indigenization' (*korenizatsiya*), proclaimed by Moscow in 1921. In non-Russian republics and provinces, posts in all party, government, cultural and economic institutions were eventually to be filled by indigenous people. On the one hand this meant facilities for training the indigenous Caucasian people so that they could become officials, accountants, teachers, nurses, doctors and other skilled workers, in their ethnic territories. Conversely, it was expected that non-indigenous, mainly Russian, officials appointed to non-Russian republics would adjust themselves to their new context by learning the local language.[1] Thus official business and correspondence could be conducted in the vernacular, which would also be used in the economy, scholarship, literature and art.[2]

The situation in the Caucasus was complicated by specific geographical and political factors. The whole USSR was as far as possible insulated from the rest of the world by censorship and tightly circumscribed sources of information, by severe restrictions on travel abroad for its own citizens, and by very limited opportunities for foreigners to travel in the USSR, controlled by the state tourist monopoly, Inturist. The Caucasus, however, was doubly isolated. Viewed from Russia, 'Transcaucasia' lay beyond the high Caucasus range, where roads were few and access by railways was possible only around its western and eastern ends, or by ship over the Black Sea or the Caspian. Until the 1950s air transport was very limited: flights from Russia to the administrative centre, Tbilisi, had to circumvent the mountains via Groznyy and Baku, and it was only with the advent of jet propulsion that, in 1959, the high-altitude route over the mountains was introduced.[3] North Caucasus, lying within the Russian or Rossiyan[4] Republic (RSFSR), was more accessible, but shared many of the same problems, and the degree of Islamic fervour present in Ingush-Chechenia and Daghestan – strengthened, not weakened, by persecution and concealment – prevented Russians from penetrating below the surface. These specific cultural and political features, requiring intimate knowledge of local customs, made native Caucasians such as Orjonikidze and Stalin indispensable during the 1920s and, from 1930 onwards, led to the 'special relationship' between Moscow's 'security organs' and the Caucasus suggested by the phrase 'Beria's fiefdom'.[5]

The Bolsheviks were justified in their special vigilance towards the Caucasus. General resentment against Russian reconquest of the region and the suppression of its independent governments was evident in intense Islamic resistance in Daghestan and North Caucasus which continued sporadically until the late 1920s, while in Georgia anti-Russian conspiracies immediately after the proclamation of the Georgian ASSR culminated in an armed uprising in western Georgia in 1924. Moreover, Stalin had personal reasons for treating his Georgian homeland with suspicion.

The Cossack lands, 1919–1939

After the Russian Civil War the Cossack lands on the Don, Kuban and Terek were devastated, their farms neglected, their population halved and their society disrupted. During the White army's evacuation some 50,000 Cossacks had departed along with many non-Russian natives (Kalmyks, Circassians and others) to seek refuge in Turkey and Greece or, eventually, in western Europe.[6]

The devastation and depopulation of the Don Province largely resulted from the Cossack anti-Bolshevik uprising which began in spring 1919. By then many Cossacks supported the Red cause, but the Bolsheviks' requisitioning of grain, horses and carts, and mass shootings of the population, caused a revolt in northern districts.[7] Beating off Red forces, 40,000 Cossacks joined up with the Whites, making possible Denikin's advance on Moscow in May. Local Bolshevik committees then ordered punitive action against the Cossacks as an inherently ‘counter-revolutionary element’, thereby only increasing Cossack solidarity and allowing the Whites to occupy the whole Don province and much of Ukraine. By January 1920 almost half of Denikin's

Volunteer Army consisted of Cossacks, by no means all of 'prosperous' status.[8]

The Don Cossack rebellion was put down by the communists with great ferocity: in conformity with the propagandist view that all Cossacks were 'kulaks', the aim was to exterminate 'to the last man' all 'prosperous' Cossacks who opposed the communist government. Although this plan was conceived as early as January 1919 by the Bolshevik Central Committee[9] (then postponed because Lenin hoped that Cossack collaboration could be obtained by persuasion) (Russian writers since the 1990s make Trotskiy the evil genius who perpetrated this genocide.[10] A directive from the Military Committee ordered 'total annihilation…shooting on the spot for all those with weapons, and even the extermination of a fixed percentage of the male population'.[11]

Thus began the 'de-Cossackization' (*raskazachivanye*) of the Don and other provinces, as a result of which in 1920 the various Hosts were disbanded, and the Cossacks, ceasing to exist as a social group, became practically outlawed. The Don Cossack province became part of the new North Caucasus Territory, along with the Kuban--Black Sea, Stavropol and Terek provinces. Not only was the Cossacks' hereditary military status abolished (it had in any case grown irksome to many Cossack farmers), the wearing of traditional Cossack costume proscribed, and most Cossacks debarred from taking service in the Red Army, but they were also relegated to the peasant class. However, the continuing social cohesion of the Cossacks was favoured by the fact that they did not live in small villages, but large settlements (*stanitsa*s), some containing as many as 40,000 inhabitants.[12]

By the end of 1919 their critical situation had made some Cossacks submit to Soviet dictatorship. As the Cossack territories were beaten into submission, the communists applied their class preconceptions to them, specifically deciding that, notwithstanding the devastation caused by the Civil War, the North Caucasus and other Cossack regions still possessed 'big grain surpluses' which the state could extract by requisitioning. However, two factors made this robbery even more difficult in the Cossack lands than in central Russia. On the one hand, many Cossacks, being efficient and prosperous farmers, who were prepared to fight to defend their livelihood, conformed in general to the 'kulak' stereotype. On the other hand, the poor peasant 'outsiders' whom the Bolsheviks favoured by sharing out Cossack lands among them were incapable of utilizing it effectively. In a trial run for agricultural collectivization peasant 'outsiders' were formed into communal farms in 1920–1; but if – as Lenin confessed – the RSFSR survived during these years thanks to grain supplies from south-western Siberia and North Caucasus, this was scarcely thanks to the new collective farmers, since their communes remained unproductive. To the Bolsheviks, the poor peasants were chiefly a means of breaking the strength of the Cossacks,[13] and this contributed largely to the famine of 1921–2 in the Cossack lands.

The 1920–1 grain requisitioning in North Caucasus destroyed those who had produced the grain, and the Cossacks, facing the violence of communist grain-procurement gangs, saw no hope of regaining their former prosperity. Despite the Russian KP's efforts to bring them on to their side by organizing an 'All-Russian Congress of Working Cossacks' in January 1920, many ex-Cossacks combined in a wave of anti-Bolshevik revolts, the biggest and most prolonged of which occurred on the Kuban, where some 10,000 Cossacks rose up against the Soviet government in a guerrilla war for survival which (like all resistance to communist dictatorship) was officially described as ‘banditry’. Rebel groups found refuge in the Sal steppe and the forested valleys of the North Caucasus, and formed an ‘Army for the Regeneration of Russia’. Some Kuban Cossacks continued their resistance for several years, emerging from time to time to raid towns and communications. Their most famous leaders, Dunko and Vasyuk, defied the Soviet authorities to the death, and it was not until 1925 that the last Cossack bands abandoned their struggle, and the Kuban settled down to an uneasy peace.[14]

The communists’ reversion to a partly free economy in 1924 provided a respite even for Cossack farmers, encouraging them to cultivate fields which had lain abandoned, so that the Kuban regained some of its previous productivity. Rejecting attempts to create class enmity among them, many continued to maintain that all Cossacks were equal and that there were no categories of ‘rich’, ‘middling’ and ‘poor’ among them, and for a time the propaganda against them as ‘class enemies’ subsided.[15]

In 1929, however, the Don and North Caucasus, like Ukraine and the middle Volga, were designated as areas where total collectivization was to be carried out within a year. On the Kuban, indeed, the attack on ‘kulaks’ had recommenced in June 1926, when the Communist Party's notorious OGPU (secret police) ‘uncovered’ seventy-one underground groups, and killed about 300 ‘bandits’ in twelve months. In 1928 some 35,000 Kuban farms (about 175,000 people) were earmarked for eviction from their farms and deportation as ‘kulaks’; at least 600 of these were shot. In

February 1930 9,000 more farms in Kuban and Stavropol provinces were ‘dekulakized’ and their inhabitants (about 45,000 people of all ages) were exiled. Seeing this as a declaration of war by the communists, many Cossacks resorted to burning their hay and slaughtering their livestock, thus bringing themselves into the first category of peasant ‘class enemies’, who were to be ‘isolated and sent to concentration camps’, or the second category, to be ‘deported to remote areas’. Resistance to collectivization amounted to a desperate armed revolt on the lower Volga, the Sal steppe north of Stavropol, and the Kuban, where the KP ruthlessly deployed cavalry and armoured cars to subjugate the Cossacks. Thousands were shot and tens of thousands – the populations of whole *stanitsa*s – were deported to ‘special settlements’ (prison camps) in semi-desert areas.[16]

As such punitive operations did not induce the farmers to co-operate in state grain procurement, in October 1932 a KP commission was sent to force the Cossacks and other farmers to hand over their ‘surplus’ grain. Some local communists protested that the harvest shortfall was real, and that the last remnants of winter food and seed-corn should not be seized from the farmers, but such appeals were brushed aside, and even harsher coercion was applied, including deportation of whole *stanitsa*s to the far north and Siberia. By December 1932 more than 63,500 farming people of the Kuban region, mainly Cossacks, had been uprooted from their homes and deported. Meanwhile an intense press campaign against those Cossack farmers (the majority) who remained outside the kolkhozes began, with a call to ‘shoot the counter-revolutionary wreckers’ for alleged sabotage of the harvest and autumn sowing. In December 1932 a punitive expedition of special troops of the Communist Party's terror police descended on the Kuban. In

Tikhoretskaya 600 elderly Cossacks were stripped naked and machinegunned in the square. In another settlement all Cossacks whose names began with letters A--L were exiled to Archangel province. No wonder, then, that the collective farmers were driven to violence, vainly setting their dogs on communist farm foremen or stabbing them with pitchforks.[17]

The KP's grain-procurement target was reached, at the cost of leaving the whole Kuban region (like most of south Russia, Ukraine and the middle Volga) practically devoid of food for the winter. The resulting famine, lasting into 1933, killed thousands, and in many villages 40–60% of the inhabitants perished. The regions most devastated by this manmade famine were the former Cossack territories and Ukraine, where hundreds of thousands of victims were sacrificed to the 'great socialist revolution on the land'.[18]

Thus the genocide of 'de-Cossackization' (first begun in 1919) was almost completed in 1933. To escape 'liquidation' some of the Kuban Cossacks went into hiding in the Caucasian mountains where, along with the Circassians, these fiercely anti-communist rebels still lurked, waiting for a chance of vengeance on the commissars, as war approached in 1941. Those who submitted and remained in their homes harboured bitter anger, ready to break out if and when conditions changed. Meanwhile, among those communities which had so far survived more or less unscathed, the Moscow government concentrated on persecuting the Kuban Cossacks' Ukrainian culture, arresting teachers, closing Ukrainian schools and banning the teaching of Ukrainian. In 1936, however, in anticipation of a European war, Stalin's Communist Party found it expedient to relax this oppression, and units of Don, Kuban and Terek Cossacks were again formed, amounting eventually to five divisions with 100,000 men – not all horsemen or of Cossack origin. With their traditional uniforms, carabines and sabres they looked impressive, but were no match for the tanks and artillery which they would encounter in modern warfare.[19]

The Kalmyks

Because of their history and remote location between the lower Volga and North Caucasus steppe, the Kalmyks in the early twentieth century were one of the most isolated ethnic communities in European Russia. They preserved their Mongolian social organization and were the only Buddhist ethnic community in Europe, taking pride in an impressive temple built for them in St Petersburg in 1909–15.[20] In 1917 the Kalmyks, still almost exclusively cattle-herders living in felt tents, were dragged into modern politics and institutions as the sense of liberation brought by the February Revolution stirred even their leaders to form provisional committees. The one convened in Petrograd reflected in its title, the 'Buryat--Kalmyk Committee', the Kalmyks' awareness of their Siberian ethnic affiliations. Supporting the Russian Provisional Government, it aimed to abolish the hated imperial system of local administration by police and *uls* 'guardians', in favour of democratic government. However, Kalmyk affairs were soon complicated by disagreement between the Buryats in Siberia and the 'official' Buryat--Kalmyk Committee in Petrograd over the form of Buryatia's new administration, and this dispute was overtaken by the Bolshevik coup in October. Meanwhile on 25 March 1917 the first separate Kalmyk National Congress was held in Astrakhan. Its participants resolved to establish parliamentary democracy and successfully petitioned Russia's Provisional Government for the creation of a Kalmyk province. The second congress in July, with 136 delegates from Astrakhan, Stavropol, the Don and the Terek, approved a project for elected local councils, while the first congress of Kalmyk clergy resolved to increase the number of lamas, introduce Buddhist instruction in Kalmyk schools and build new monasteries. Before any of these proposals could become reality, however, the Bolshevik coup occurred, and the Kalmyk Astrakhan Host leaders were among the signatories to the October treaty founding the anti-Bolshevik ‘South-East Union of Cossack Hosts, Caucasus Mountaineers and Free Peoples of the Steppes’.[21]

Thus the Kalmyks’ homeland became one of the battlegrounds of the Russian Civil War. In January 1918, when the Bolsheviks took Astrakhan, Kalmyk officials and military units led by Prince D. Tudutov left the city. A year later the Whites’ advance through the Don territory and eventual capture of Tsaritsyn brought the Kalmyk steppe under their control again. It was at this time that Lenin (presumably moved by his family's links with Astrakhan) made an appeal to ‘brother Kalmyks’, in which he admitted acts of violence by Bolsheviks which had driven the Kalmyks into the White camp and promised that such acts would be punished and that, if the Kalmyks came over to the Red Army, they would be amnestied and receive land. This appeal, however, gained little response. In October 1919, when the Bolsheviks reoccupied Kalmykia, there was an immediate uprising against them, which gave the Bolsheviks further pretext to consider them ‘unreliable’ and bar Kalmyks from service in the Red Army.[22] Meanwhile violence struck the Kalmyks on the Don, when anti-Cossack communists surrounded them in Platovskaya village and massacred 150 men, women and children. The White government of the Don decided to extricate the Kalmyk Cossacks from their perilous situation by way of Novorossiysk, but in the chaos of the White evacuation in February 1920 many Kalmyk refugees died or were left behind.

The ensuing famine in the Volga region further reduced the Kalmyk population, so that, compared with 190,000 in 1897, by 1926 they numbered only 129,000. As the Bolshevik Russian occupation of Kalmykia in 1919 was accompanied by reprisals, especially against Buddhist monasteries, sporadic resistance continued until 1926. Nevertheless, some Kalmyks went over to the Bolsheviks because they believed the latter would save Kalmykia, and at the first Congress of Kalmyk Soviets in 1919 Anton Amur-Sanan proclaimed that communism was bringing a bright future for his people. Indeed, they did at first derive some benefit from this: in November 1920 the communist government, in creating the Kalmyk Autonomous Province (AP) provided them with several corridors through riverside land inhabited mainly by Russians, giving them access to the Volga for water, fishing and grazing.[23]

This was partly because Russia had involved itself in the affairs of Outer Mongolia. After the Russo-Japanese War, while Outer Mongolia was in the throes of revolt against Peking, it had become an arena for Japanese--Russian rivalry. In 1921 the Bolshevik government sent revolutionary agents to Mongolia to ‘help’ it expel the Chinese. Thus appeared the Mongol People's Republic which, as Moscow's puppet, proclaimed ‘independence’ in 1924, its nationalist government committing it to ‘non-capitalist development’. Meanwhile, from 1918 onwards Soviet Russia's agency, the ‘Communist International’ (Comintern), was working to bring Outer Mongolia under Russian control by training revolutionaries and undermining Buddhism, and among the agents performing these tasks were Kalmyks converted to communism.[24] Indeed the Bolsheviks’ creation of the Kalmyk AP arose from their desire to make a favourable impression in Asia by exhibiting solicitude for Russia's Buddhists.

Soon, however, Moscow's true intentions for Kalmyk culture emerged: in 1924 it decreed that the number of Buddhist temples (*khuruk*s) must be greatly reduced. This proceeded quite quickly in districts nearest to the Caucasus, but more slowly in those adjacent to the Don and Orenburg provinces, to avoid discouraging Kalmyks there from moving into the Kalmyk AP. Although many *khuruk*s were closed and demolished, Buddhist observances persisted, including pilgrimages to ‘holy places’. One popular shrine near Chilgir contained the mummified body of a revered monk, Lavga, who had died in the 1850s. In 1929 an anti-religious meeting was organized there, and a mock trial was held at which the long-dead monk, his tomb and all who visited it were condemned and the shrine destroyed.[25]

The Mongol peoples wanted to resolve their problem concerning languages and scripts. In January 1931 the ‘First Cultural Conference of Mongol Peoples’ – Kalmyks, Buryats and Mongols – gathered in Moscow to discuss the standardization of spelling and co-ordination of modern terminology in all three languages, using the ‘new’ Latin alphabet. However, the Bolsheviks – characteristically suspicious that this could become a ‘pan-Mongolist’ conspiracy – discontinued the project.[26] Thereafter they made the ‘development’ of the three literary languages follow divergent timetables and, as in every other ethnic community in the USSR, confused the issue during the 1930s by multiple changes in their alphabets.[27]

In Kalmykia alphabet changes were similarly arbitrary. The first Bolshevik newspaper in Kalmyk, *Ulan Khalmg* (*Red Kalmyk*), appeared in 1919, and this was at first printed in the old Kalmyk vertical script. As a relatively small section of Kalmyk society knew the traditional script, it was said by the Bolsheviks to be delaying cultural development, and in 1924 a modified Cyrillic alphabet was introduced. In 1930 this was replaced by the 'revolutionary' Latin alphabet, ostensibly appropriate for the 'new literature' emerging in Kalmykia. However, this, in turn, was deemed to be unsuitable and was abandoned in 1938 in favour of a modified Russian alphabet.

Educational facilities for the Kalmyks increased in the 1920s – although it is improbable that the communist state ever provided educational facilities for Kalmyks comparable with what had existed in Kalmykia before 1917 – seventy-four schools of various categories, including eight for girls, all founded by Kalmyk and Russian philanthropists. By 1927 there were more than 150 Soviet schools, and literacy was widespread, but there was no higher education for Kalmyks until a Faculty of Kalmyk History and Philology was opened in 1929 at Saratov university.[28]

Despite the Marxist designation of the Kalmyks' social structure as 'nomadic feudalism', suggesting that they were even less likely than the Russian peasantry to benefit from collectivization of agriculture – another piece of theoretical utopianism applied to all communities in Russia's empire – this was forced upon them in 1929, with dire effects. The KP made its first target the big cattle farms: their feudal owners were swiftly expropriated, and their livestock handed over to newly created collective farms. Like Russian (and all other) farmers, however, despite the fact that life for ordinary herdsmen had never been easy, the Kalmyks, as formerly ‘free people of the steppes’, saw collectivization as enslavement. According to the communists, on the eve of collectivization 48% of all livestock was owned by 5.4% of Kalmyk farmers, who were categorized as ‘kulaks’ although the average number of cattle in their herds was only ‘forty or more’.[29] Little information reached the outside world about the collectivization of the Kalmyks, but it undoubtedly caused sufferings, comparable with those which devastated their neighbours beyond the Volga, the Kazaks, for whom ‘The forced settlement of the nomads was among the worst outrages during the “construction of socialism”.’[30]

To the communists, collectivization of nomadic peoples and their settlement in fixed villages went together. In order to gain complete control of the Kazakstan steppes, the KP enforced immediate settlement, ignoring the Kazaks’ deeply ingrained perceptions of normal life. The 372 Kazak revolts caused by this were violently suppressed by Russia's security troops, 180,000 Kazaks were exiled to the north, 13,151 people were sent to concentration camps, and 3,386 were executed by shooting. In desperation some 28,100 Kazaks migrated into Chinese Xinjiang and more distant lands. The total loss of Kazak population amounted to 1.7 million.[31] As part of the population of Kalmykia were Kazaks,[32] the Kalmyks could not have been unaware of the latters’ murderous treatment by the Russian Communist Party. Knowing that collectivization would rob them of any initiative in tending their herds, probably the majority of Kalmyks joined the spontaneous rebellion which, as everywhere, included the mass slaughter of the nomads’ only wealth – their own cattle. Some 10% of the Kalmyk population (c. 12,000 people) were arrested and deported to ‘special settlements’ in the Far North; of these about a quarter died in transit. Kalmykia also came within the zone worst affected by the collectivization famine of 1932–4, during which about 20,000 people died.[33]

In 1935, however, the Kalmyk AP was raised to the status of an ASSR as a reward for the officially reported achievements of its workers in the building of socialism. Thereafter, facilities for its 'cultural revolution' were increased, chiefly in the Kalmyk capital, Elista. A theatre was founded, education and scholarship (strictly non-Buddhist) were boosted in 1938 by a new teachers' college, which a year later became a university, and in 1941 the Kalmyk Research Institute for Language, Literature and History opened. Although universal primary education was established in Kalmykia in 1930, and the transition to the use of the native language in schools was declared complete in 1937, the third alphabet 'reform' imposed on the Kalmyks in 1938, whereby the Latin alphabet was replaced by Cyrillic, initiated another period of relearning. In the same year came the general regulation obliging children in all non-Russian republics to learn Russian, with its potential for undermining the use of the native languages.[34]

Despite Moscow's hypocritical show of concern for the preservation of Kalmyk culture, the communist assault on Kalmyk national culture continued with further religious persecution. In 1938 a list of 'outstanding monuments' (*khurul*s and Orthodox churches) showed that none were in fact operating, and many were already in ruins. Only one *khurul*, at Khosheut, survived until the 1980s. Typically absurd ideological meddling had occurred in 1934 in relation to the Kalmyk folk epic *Janhr*, which was vilified for its 'religious and reactionary content' deriving from its 'feudal context'. Not only was it 'reinterpreted' from the Russian Marxist point of view, but a sequel, *Yorel*, was composed, in which Stalin was praised as the reincarnation of *Janhr's* heroes, and his building of socialism was presented as the attainment of the Kalmyk people's long-cherished dream of freedom in the Buddhist utopia Bumba. How far removed this was from reality had been demonstrated by the Terror of the 1930s when a high proportion of Kalmykia's first communist leaders, including A. Pürbeyev, chairman of the Kalmyk Soviet and secretary of its KP, and writers such as A. M. Amur-Sanan and A. Chapchayev, along with practically all of the intelligentsia and Buddhist priesthood – some 5,000 people – were killed or consigned to concentration camps. The reason was the commonplace accusation that they were 'bourgeois-nationalists' working with foreign agents for the separation of Kalmykia from the USSR.[35]

Azerbaijan, 1921–1939

The contrast between what Azerbaijanis had expected from their new Soviet Republic and the role which was intended for it by the communists was clear from the start. Most Azerbaijanis,[36] with their Shi^{c}ah Muslim beliefs, their recently conceived nationalism and their leaning towards Turkey, wanted their republic to develop a strongly national culture under the rule of Nariman Narimanov, leader of the revived Himmät (Endeavour) socialist party, chairman of the Azerbaijan Military Revolutionary Committee which the Bolsheviks installed in Baku in April 1920, and later chairman of Azerbaijan's Council of People's Commissars. So far as the Transcaucasian Federation, formed in 1922, was concerned, Narimanov was well aware that 'For Soviet Russia, the union with Georgia and Armenia is not a matter of particular importance; but Baku – that is the very life of Soviet Russia.'[37] The supreme importance of Azerbaijan's oil ruled out freedom of action for socialists like Narimanov, who had sincerely believed (along with Sultan-ᶜAliyev) that ‘Marxism would liberate his land from Russian colonialism’. Although he was appointed in 1922 to chairmanship of the Council of the Transcaucasian Federation he was soon, like many non-Russian leaders, removed from his home republic by ‘promotion’ to Russian KP posts in Moscow, where his death in 1925 was attributed by Azerbaijani colleagues to the Cheka. Narimanov had told Stalin that (as opposed to internationalism) ‘the “national tendency will last as long as…[the] opposite tendency [Russian chauvinism] exists”’ – echoing Sultan-ᶜAliyev's ‘national communist’ heresy, Moscow's attack on which had already caused the demotion of the Azerbaijani communist Khanbudaghov for allegedly organizing a nationalist faction.[38]

The young Russian zealot Sergey Kirov, installed as secretary of the Azerbaijan KP in 1921, immediately smelt ‘ultra-nationalism’ among the Azerbaijani communist leadership, and ordered its suppression by the head of the Azerbaijan Cheka, Mir Jafar Baghyrov (Bagirov), a pro-Russian whose career in the secret police and subsequently the Azerbaijan KP and republican government was to last for more than 30 years. He was an important link in the chain of command between Moscow and Transcaucasia where, along with Beria in Georgia, he presided over a reign of terror lasting ‘almost continuously from the sovietization of the country until World War II’. Thus, as in other areas of the Caucasus, one of the commonest accusations made against Muslim communists was ‘Sultangaliyevism’.[39]

The number of Azerbaijani members of the republic's Communist Party was small – in 1923 about 2,900 (47% of the total membership), and in 1925 about 10,700 (43% of the total). These were the lowest percentages for any SSR at that time, contrasting with Georgia (62% of KP membership were Georgians in 1922, 55% in 1927, thereafter c. 66% until 1937), and Armenia, which had the highest percentage of indigenous party members of any union republic – consistently 89–90% from 1922 to 1937. The level of indigenization among state officials was also low in Azerbaijan – in 1929 only 36% at republican level and 69% at district level, compared with Georgia – 74% and 81% respectively – while Armenia was again the highest in the USSR, with 94% and 95%.[40]

Since 1920 the Bolsheviks had used Baku as an eastern 'shop window' to publicize the achievements of the Soviet régime, with its alleged principles of cultural autonomy and democracy, in contrast with the oppression under which the subject peoples of the British and other empires were said to exist. Until then most conferences of oriental peoples had been held in Moscow or Kazan, but in 1920 Baku was the venue for Russia's First Congress of Peoples of the East, at which 1,891 delegates of 37 different nationalities listened to a call for a 'holy war' against 'Western imperialism'. This event (more Islamic than socialist) was not repeated in Baku, but the city did become the headquarters of a movement to replace the Arabic script used for many Asiatic languages with the Latin alphabet, which could be adapted to their sounds.[41] Latinization suited Bolshevik purposes because it was more 'modern' and, more importantly, because it might undermine rote-learning of the Koran. In 1922 a committee for Latinization was established in Baku, and Azerbaijan's adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1924 confirmed the republic's role as champion of the Latinization movement. Inevitably this innovation was opposed by Muslim traditionalists, at whose hands some school-teachers who supported Latinization were killed. In 1925 an education conference in North Caucasus decided to adapt the new alphabet for Chechen, Ingush, Kabardan, Adygey and Karachay, and in 1926 the ‘Transcaucasian Federation’ decreed that the ‘new’ Latin alphabet was compulsory.[42]

Baku's leading role in Turkic-language politics continued with the First Turcological Congress in 1926, although what caught the attention of delegates most were continuing Tatar objections to the Latin alphabet, and the perceptive observation by ᶜAlimjan Sharaf that the USSR government's support for Latinization was a cynical ploy, merely as a stage towards the ultimate imposition of the Russian alphabet throughout the USSR. The culmination of Baku's Latinization campaign was the institution in 1927 of an All-Union Committee for the New Turkic Alphabet, encharged with creating an alphabet common to all Turkic languages, and in 1929 Moscow decreed the compulsory abandonment of Arabic script throughout the USSR, and a ban on the import of Arabic printing presses. In 1930, however, because of unspecified ‘shortcomings’ Baku was deprived of its key role in alphabet development, and the Turkic Alphabet Committee was moved to Moscow. In 1935 the committee was officially criticized for promoting the Latin alphabet and belittling the Russian alphabet, and in 1937 Moscow decreed that Latin script was to be abandoned in favour of a suitably modified Russian alphabet used for all languages of the USSR. This seemed to show that Moscow's ultimate aim was to require all peoples of the USSR to learn Russian.[43] What remains unexplained is why (since Stalin does not seem to have been sentimental about such matters) the only exceptions made to this decree were the alphabets of Armenian and Georgian.

The Bolsheviks’ direct attack on Islam began in 1920 with the Azerbaijan Ministry of Education's decree ‘On freedom of conscience’. This was applied cautiously at first because it was anticipated that the Azerbaijanis might defend their Shi^{c}ah faith fanatically, but in fact some mullahs willingly gave their support by endorsing the government's claim that Soviet Russia was saving Islam from ‘British imperialism’. From 1923 some mosques were closed, and the liberalization of Islam began with the organization of women's clubs as centres for practical training and education. The world's first Muslim women's magazine appeared in Baku, and communists mocked the self-mutilation festival of Ashura, which is central to Shi^{c}ism. A branch of the Atheists’ Union opened in Baku in 1925, and its young members were incited to seize mosque property, campaign against Ramadhan as a waste of working time, and open an anti-religious museum.[44] In 1926 the movement among Muslim women for emancipation began. The first stage was a demonstration organized on ‘International Women's Day’ by the feminist Aina Sultanova, who had spoken out against the tyranny of the Koran and *shari^{c}ah* over women at an Azerbaijani Women's Congress in 1921. She campaigned for women's release from the social restrictions and inequalities imposed on them: the harem, arranged marriage, and exclusion from education, employment and cultural activities – all symbolized by the veil. Despite Moscow's anti-religious campaigns, in 1928 Azerbaijan still had more than 1,500 mosques (1,000 Shi^{c}i and 500 Sunni), and even later, despite large membership of atheist associations, the Muslim practice of *taqiyyah*, ‘dissimulation’, allowed many Azerbaijanis to remain crypto-Muslims.[45] Consequently, KPSS decrees of 1929 ordering women to discard the veil and prohibiting the use of Arabic script engendered fierce opposition and added to the unrest generated by the enforced collectivization of agriculture.

Moscow had commanded that the ‘revolution in the countryside’ must be carried out swiftly throughout ‘Transcaucasia’, and the Azerbaijani peasants’ reaction was immediate and violent. Least resistance was offered in the cotton-growing areas, where field-work was already organized on an industrial basis, with collectivized workers and machine-hiring stations. Cotton-growing had been largely destroyed during the Civil War, but now its restoration became one of Moscow's priorities for reviving the Azerbaijan economy. While Azerbaijan's cotton production was much less than that in Uzbekistan, the USSR's largest producer of raw cotton, it increased considerably during the 1930s and became an important part of Azerbaijan's economy. Resistance to the destruction of existing rural structures occurred mainly among the arable farmers and the nomadic cattle-herders with their highly traditional way of life, based on transhumance between mountain summer pastures and lowland winter pastures.[46]

By 1937 the population of Azerbaijan had increased from 2,302,000 in 1926 to 3,057,000.[47] Apart from the Azerbaijanis (62.1% of the total in 1926), and large contingents of Russians (9.5%) and Armenians (12.2%), other ethnic communities amounted to only 16% of the population, including: the Iranian-speaking Talysh of Lankaran district in the south (77,000); the Lezgis on the northern border (perhaps 50,000, separated from the 80,000 Lezgis living in Daghestan); the Tats[48] (c. 28,000); and Kurds (perhaps 14,000).[49] These minorities were encouraged by Bolshevik declarations to expect full civil rights when the South Caucasian republics were established. Because relatively liberal attitudes prevailed until Lenin's death, for instance, a Kurdish National Region (NR) was created in Azerbaijan, – a narrow strip, with a population of 35,000–

40,000 Kurds, linking winter pastures near the Araxes with summer grazing in the Zangezur mountains, west of the newly designated Highland Karabagh AP. However, because of the Turkish nationalism (comparable with Great Russian chauvinism) of the Azerbaijanis, who actively sought to Azerbaijanize the Kurds and other minorities, the Kurdish NR was abolished in 1929. In contrast with Georgia and Armenia, where an alphabet for the Kurdish communities was created, during the brief existence of Azerbaijan's Kurdish Region ‘not a single book was published in Kurdish and no Kurdish schools were set up’. A 1927 report on education in Azerbaijan mentions schools for non-Azerbaijanis, but specifies only those for Armenians and Russians – again differing from Armenia and Georgia, where schools existed for Kurds, Assyrians, Osetians and other minorities.[50]

The pre-1917 division of the Lezgis by the Azerbaijan--Daghestan frontier on the Samur was reinforced by the Russians: despite the Daghestan prime minister N. Samurskiy's good relations with the KP leadership in Moscow, requests by the Lezgis for reunification in an autonomous territory were not entertained.[51] Clearly, the Azerbaijani régime which had just succeeded in gaining control over Nakhchavan and Armenian Highland Karabagh shared Kemal Atatürk's antagonism towards ethnic minorities and was not inclined to see its small empire divided among autonomous ethnic regions. Since Azerbaijan, the custodian of Caspian oil, knew its own importance for Moscow's strategic interests, it was uninhibited in pursuing a course of Azerbaijanian dominance and assimilation of minorities.[52] The Lezgis’ desire for unification of their own territory could therefore be safely ignored. Azerbaijani nationalism became blatant in the 1930s, and Lezgis in particular felt the effects as their territory south of the Samur was colonized by

Azerbaijanis, and Lezgi-language schools were closed, as was the Lezgi theatre in Baku.[53]

The case of the Talysh and Tats was similar: in contrast with the recognition accorded to small nations in North Caucasus, 'In Muslim Transcaucasia a diametrically opposed policy… was adopted.' With the aim of achieving the coherence of all nationalities around the Azerbaijanis, the 'Talysh and Tat were deprived of their national languages after some half-hearted moves [in the 1920s] to give these a written form, and…they were absorbed into the Azeri nation'. In 1936–8 all schools with teaching in Talysh were closed, all publishing and radio broadcasts in Talysh discontinued, and Talysh leaders were disposed of.[54]

The republic was officially permitted to incorporate the policy of Azerbaijanization in its new constitution in 1936, according to which Azerbaijani became the sole official language for all inhabitants. No other nationalities were mentioned as citizens of Azerbaijan: all, including Lezgis and other Daghestanis, were now 'Azerbaijanis'. Clearly this reflected the influence of Kemal's authoritarian Turkey, where all non-Turk citizens (such as Circassians) were deprived of national minority status. Except for Jews, Armenians and Greeks, all others counted as Turks, all languages other than Turkish were proscribed, as were non-Turkish surnames, associations, schools, customs and festivals. This emulation of the Turkish model must have received at least the tacit acquiescence of Moscow, as a way of maintaining the loyalty of the Azerbaijani leadership. The mass redesignation of people's nationality was enforced by obligatory renewal of internal passports, during which many Lezgis, Talysh and others had to re-register as Azerbaijanis, and some publicly abjured their native languages. Thereafter, Lezgis living in Azerbaijan who refused to repudiate their nationality were explicitly second-class citizens, penalized by a special ‘tax’ imposed on them for entry to higher education.[55] The Iranian-speaking Talysh (numbering more than 99,000 in the suppressed 1937 Census)[56] ‘disappeared’ from Azerbaijan's population for half a century, although they continued to occupy their ancestral land in Lankaran district, isolated from their compatriots across the border in Iran's ‘Third Province’ (Ostan sevvom, now Ardabil Province). The collusion of the Moscow government in this ethnonymic genocide is proved by the absence of any mention of the Talysh in all accounts of USSR nationalities between 1939 and 1989, when they reappeared in the USSR Census – much reduced to 21,000 people.[57]

Thus, contrary to the pious declarations in the USSR Constitution, the Lezgi, Talysh and other nationalities of the Azerbaijan SSR were deprived of civil rights, including education in their own language, in order to satisfy the desire of nationalist rulers in Baku for an ethnically homogeneous Azerbaijan.

North-east Caucasus

Although by 1920 the Russian Civil War was officially over and ‘Soviet power…was established once and for all’,[58] in fact the war against the Bolsheviks in the mountains of Chechenia and north-west Daghestan continued sporadically for many years. While the Mountain ASSR and the Daghestan ASSR were proclaimed in January 1921, much of their territory remained beyond the control of the local Bolsheviks; only in the lowlands, where the Red Army kept a tight grip on occupied territory, were they able to impose considerable changes.

In an address to a Congress of Peoples of Terek province in November 1920 Stalin declared that, in view of Russian chauvinism and the native peoples' nationalism, conflicts between the mountain peoples and Cossacks could be avoided only by separating their settlements. Accordingly, when an area of Terek province around Khasav-yurt and Kyzlar, with a mainly Kumuk and Nogay population, was added to Daghestan, the local Cossacks were moved out. Similarly, in 1921 landless Ingush and Chechens were transferred from the mountains to the plain, displacing Cossacks on the river Sunzha. This eviction of Russian Cossacks for the benefit of Chechens and Ingush increased the antagonism of Russians in Groznyy towards the indigenous peoples, leading to a proposal by local communists that Groznyy, along with neighbouring Cossack *stanitsa*s, should be detached from the Mountain Republic as a separate province, but this was rejected by the provincial KP committee as a colonial attitude.[59]

At first Soviet Russia appeared to show some flexibility towards the Muslim peoples by tolerating 'national communists', such as the Chechen ᶜAli Mitayev, who attempted to reconcile Bolshevik revolution with the *shariᶜah*. In Daghestan there was even a 'People's Commissariat for the Shariᶜah', which functioned until 1927. In general, however, Russian colonial attitudes led to war in 1920–5, and indeed to 'an almost uninterrupted succession of rebellions…punitive counter-expeditions and individual terrorism' from 1920 to 1943.[60]

Despite this turmoil, the communist system was imposed. In Daghestan a Soviet Congress in December 1920 elected the Lezgi Najmuddin Samurskiy as its chairman, and in 1921 he became head of the newly created Daghestan ASSR. At that time about 95% of Daghestan's population were indigenous people – chiefly poor peasants – and practically all Soviet officials were Daghestanis. Even where anti-Bolshevik partisans were not active, life was unsettled because of the exaction of ‘food tax’ by the Bolsheviks, who ignored the fact that Daghestan had suffered not only from the 1921–3 famine, when about 500,000 Daghestanis were starving, but also from a series of natural disasters. In response to pleas from hungry villagers Samurskiy sought and received famine aid from ‘Transcaucasia’ – but none came from Moscow. From the start Samurskiy argued for real autonomy for Daghestan, instead of its subordination to the KP's south-eastern bureau in Rostov-on-Don. In October 1922 on his own initiative he mitigated the tax in kind required from the peasants, over 80% of whom farmed less than one acre and possessed only two cows and a dozen sheep or goats. At this time the Moscow government asserted control over national territories by requiring them to report all initiatives through their representatives in Moscow, and it censured independent action by leaders such as Samurskiy. However, he defended his actions, and in 1923 received funds for industrial projects including a canal to divert water from the Sulak – the first of a series of dams and canals for irrigation and electricity generation which were to ‘transform nature’ in Daghestan. In their desperation after the famine (and in conformity with long custom) some Chechen and Daghestan tribesmen resorted to cattle-rustling expeditions in Georgia's Tushi and Khevsuri mountain districts; in such disputes, including the rivalry between Chechens and Andis over land, the communist government in the 1920s attempted to negotiate amicable settlements.[61]

Soon after the formation of the USSR Moscow began a reorganization of administrative territories into thirteen large economic regions. One result was the inclusion of most of the former Don, Kuban, Black Sea, Stavropol and Terek provinces along with their native communities in a Southeast (or North Caucasus) Territory, which in 1924–36 was administered from Rostov-on-Don.[62] This evoked immediate protest from all non-Russian territories. In Daghestan and North Osetia communists complained that replacement of the direct representation in Moscow, which had hitherto existed, with 'horizontal' subordination to Rostov merely created an extra level of bureaucracy: 'Until now our only salvation was in the representatives of the autonomous republics and provinces in the capital, who at least allowed us to obtain recognition and satisfaction of some of our demands.' Nevertheless, Moscow insisted upon subordination to Rostov, where their interests were represented by an office of the North Caucasus Territory. Only Samurskiy, it seems, succeeded in regaining independence of the Daghestan KP from Rostov, and the re-establishment of direct links with KPSS headquarters in Moscow. However, in 1928 friction between Samurskiy and the KP provincial secretary came to a head, and both were transferred to Moscow, where Samurskiy was kept until 1934. His apparent success in exempting Daghestan from Rostov's control proved temporary: in 1933 a Daghestan government decision not to victimize as 'kulaks' peasants who possessed 200 or more livestock, and to alleviate the suffering of individual farmers and 'deprivees' was overruled by the KP's South-East regional committee, and Stalin's harsh dictates were relentlessly enforced.[63] After this, only informal contact in Moscow was accessible to North Caucasians in the person of Orjonikidze, the Civil War hero who (if his OGPU bodyguard could be circumvented) welcomed petitioners from the Caucasus, as a kind of unofficial consul in the capital. Avtorkhanov, describing an audience granted by Orjonikidze to the Chechen anti-Soviet partisan leader Ibrahim Kurchaloyevskiy – a ‘bandit’ according to the NKVD – depicts Orjonikidze as ‘a true knight without fear or reproach, within a KP which Stalin was consciously turning into a party of careerists, scoundrels and criminals’.[64]

If, on the one hand, the central communist government exerted ever stricter control over the ‘autonomous’ territories, it also contrived to split combined ethnic territories, ostensibly in response to local demand. Although the multi-national Mountain ASSR lasted in name from January 1921 until July 1924, in fact its attrition began within eight months, when the Kabarda AP broke away in September 1921. This Circassian community was then combined with the Turkic Balkar region as the Kabarda-Balkar AP, while the Karachay-Cherkes AP, the Adygey (Circassian) AP and the Chechen AP also split off. In July 1924 the combined republic's last remnants, the Ingush and North Osetian APs, also separated, and the Mountain ASSR ceased to exist.[65]

The division of the North Caucasus peoples into separate small republics has been interpreted as the KP's scheme to ‘divide and conquer’.[66] This view excludes the possibility that separation arose from local nationalism among the leaders of these peoples and is contradicted by the fact that at the same time Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were being *combined* into the ‘Transcaucasian Federation’ against the separatist wishes of their inhabitants. Further evidence that all this was not simply cynical manipulation by the Moscow government lies in the fact that, while the unified Mountain ASSR lasted for a very short time, in Daghestan the nominal unity of a multitude of separate language communities was maintained – while only the Lezgis continually protested against their artificial division between Daghestan and Azerbaijan.

Thus it was not simply that 'The Russian communist rulers apparently felt that the promotion of unity among the North Caucasus peoples was not in the interest of Soviet centralism and that it was safer to have them split up again into several single units.'[67] The memory of the 'bourgeois' Mountain Republic of 1918 and its sequel in the North Caucasian peoples' independence struggle during the Second World War was inherently unpalatable to Russian communist 'internationalists', but all previous experience made it obvious that the attempt to impose close collaboration between the heterogeneous peoples of North Caucasus was unrealistic, and that their leaders would inevitably demand separate autonomy. Even among KP officials in the 1920s mutually contradictory policies motivated the still diverse Bolshevik leaders, some of whom continued to favour 'liberal' attitudes, including the combination of disparate ethnic groups into a single harmonious entity, while others nurtured inherently divisive tendencies in order to avert any regional political integration which might challenge Russian dominance. Ultimately, despite its avowed support for ethnic-territorial autonomy, the communist government's overriding considerations were military power and state security, especially in the Caucasus, where its frontiers were potentially threatened by Turkey, Iran and that ubiquitous bogey of Russian propaganda – 'British imperialism'.

Education was one of the fields in which, according to Moscow, great strides were made after 1921, with new schools opening to fulfill the aim of 'raising the cultural level…[by] universal literacy and the political enlightenment of the masses'.[68] Bolsheviks assumed that North Caucasus, as one of the 'backward borderlands of Russia' having a largely illiterate population without native written languages, textbooks or trained teachers, badly needed Russian 'enlightenment' – but they immediately encountered strong opposition from the native peoples. According to Bolshevik stereotypes, resistance to Russian education was incited exclusively by 'kulaks' and mullahs, who forced parents to keep their children away from school, obstructed the building of schools and tried to close and sometimes sabotaged those which had been opened.[69] In fact, Muslim children (boys) had attended schools long before this, but as these were *maktab*s attached to mosques, where education was rote-learning of the Koran, Bolsheviks discounted them as education. Yet even the classical Arabic of the Koran had practical value in Daghestan, since it was used as a written and spoken lingua franca among the numerous language communities in northern and central districts. Indeed Daghestan had been famed for its Islamic scholarship and the high standard of its Arabic, and the Chechens and Ingush also shared these accomplishments, since some of them, after completing *madrasah*, went to Daghestan or Baku to continue their study of Arabic thought, literature and mathematics. Nor were all Muslims rigid in their attitudes; a Chechen recounts how, about 1915, there were two schools in his native village – an Arabic *maktab* and a Russian elementary school:

> My grandfather sent me to both. In the [*maktab*]…I learned the Koran and Arabic grammar, in the Russian school it was secular subjects and Russian language…[this combination] provided me with mental gymnastics and a comparative introduction to the study of Russian. As the Russian village school had

> only five classes, when I had attended these I was able to continue my education at the *madrasah*.[70]

Many Daghestanis went on to perform the Hajj, so that in the 1880s Daghestanis had been prominent in the learned circles of Mecca. Chechens had worked on the Arabic alphabet, adapting it to the sounds of their own language, and books were printed in this alphabet in Temir-Khan Shura in 1910. Further modified, this was the Arabic alphabet that remained in use in Chechenia until 1925.[71]

One of the first things the Bolshevik government of Daghestan did in 1920 in the interests of secularization was to ban the use of Arabic. Naturally this exacerbated anti-Russian feelings, and it also raised the question of a different lingua franca. Official policy on this went through several stages. In 1923 the Daghestan KP decided that, because the autochthonous Caucasian languages were so many and various, with written forms so little developed, the only suitable choice to replace Arabic in this role would be a Turkic language – either Kumuk, which was already widely used in the north, or Azerbaijani. The latter was therefore adopted in 1926 as the official language of education and communication, but because of protests from the non-Turkic peoples this was dropped in 1930 (although still widely used until 1953), and it was decreed that Daghestan would have eleven official languages.[72] The proscription of Arabic also raised the question of which alphabet should be used for the North Caucasian languages, which to some extent had all been written in Arabic script. In 1923 the Ingush were the first to adopt the Latin alphabet for their language and compile textbooks in it. When new newspapers appeared in 1923, that for the Ingush was in the Latin alphabet, whereas the Chechens at first used Arabic type, changing to Latin in 1925. In Daghestan the Latin alphabet was introduced about the same time for Avar, Dargo, Lak and Lezgi.[73]

In the field of education, tacit disregard of KP intentions and measures continued among the indigenous peoples in the 1920s. A campaign for adult literacy in Russian was launched among the Chechens and Ingush, with dozens of literacy centres and several thousand learners. However, achievements were modest, as resistance continued, especially in Chechenia, where the Russian literacy rate was raised from 0.8% in 1920 to only 2.7% by 1926, while in Ingushia it increased from 3% to 8.3%.[74] Opposition to Soviet schools was fierce, and a direct campaign involving closure of Islamic schools would have been counterproductive, as Samurskiy warned in 1925: ‘To close the *madrassah*s is impossible. They will continue to exist whatever oppressive measures are taken against them. They will hide in canyons or in caves, and will become fanatically opposed to Soviet power, which persecutes religion.’ To a national communist like Samurskiy this would be playing into the hands of the traditionalist mullahs who saw communism as a manifestation of ‘sinful and accursed Western civilisation’ which ‘had always been a weapon for the oppression and enslavement of the Eastern people’.[75]

In fact, Chechenia in the 1930s still had 2,675 schools with teaching in the Chechen language using Arabic script, including some which taught Arabic. Daghestan in 1925 had 200 state (Russian) schools with 13,000 pupils, but its 2,000 *maktab*s had 40,000 pupils, including some from Kabarda and Karachay, while in 1928 the whole of north-western Caucasus, from Adygeya to Chechenia, still had 190 registered *maktab*s with 5,988 pupils, and 51 *madrasah*s with

726 students. According to another source, in North Caucasus in 1929 there were 2,675 mosques, 140 *maktab*s and *madrasah*s, 850 mullahs and 38 Sufi sheykhs. In 1930 the KP changed this situation by launching its campaign for universal primary education, including the building of boarding schools (*internaty*) to accommodate pupils from remote villages.[76]

Following the establishment of ‘autonomous’ native republics and provinces, Moscow ordered the surrender of all weapons, on the grounds that, as communist rule had brought happiness and prosperity for all, personal arms were no longer necessary. This message clearly did not convince many people in Chechenia, Ingushia and Daghestan, since mountaineer revolts – provoked by the OGPU's taking of hostages to induce so-called bandits to surrender – continued to occur there ‘every spring as though carefully pre-planned’.[77] In Chechenia under ᶜAli Mitayev an upsurge of resistance to Bolshevik policies by local patriots and mullahs began in 1922, to which Moscow reacted by re-establishing ‘revolutionary committees’ to deal with the wave of ‘counter-revolutionary sorties by bandit elements’. It was in an attempt to neutralize this national movement and ‘force Mitayev and his gang to show themselves up in their true colours in the eyes of the common people’[78] that an administrative re-organization in November 1922 separated the Chechens from the Mountain Republic in their own autonomous province. This immediately exacerbated the antagonism between the Chechens and the town of Groznyy with its mainly Russian (and chauvinistic) population. The Chechen Revolutionary Committee, headed by Tashtemir Eldarkhanov, reacted by voting to disband the province's ‘Communist Youth League’ (Russian ‘Komsomol’), reject the patronage of Groznyy's Bolshevik organizations over Chechenia, and integrate Groznyy within the Chechen province. This was quite contrary to Bolshevik intentions, and showed that the government's ostensible attempts to improve relations between the Chechens and the local Russians were doomed to failure – unless all Chechens were converted to communism.[79]

In fact very few native inhabitants of north-eastern Caucasus were communists in the 1920s. In 1923 the KP in Chechenia was too weak to prevent Eldarkhanov's actions, having only thirty-nine members in the whole of Chechenia, excluding Russian Groznyy. In Daghestan, too, although there were 1,826 communists in 1920, these were mainly townspeople, hence mainly Russians; in the native areas party members were counted in single figures, most villages having none whatever; only after 1925 was any significant number of Daghestanis recruited. As the Bolsheviks' real aim was to eliminate national resistance and leaders, the South-East Russia KP bureau took steps to recruit young communists, to oust members with 'bourgeois-nationalist leanings' and to disarm the population of Chechen and Ingush villages. A Chechenia Congress of Soviets in September 1923, attended by A. Mikoyan and K. Voroshilov, was used as a trap to catch the last surviving leader of the 1920–1 insurrection, ^{c}Ali Mitayev, who enjoyed enormous popularity and influence among the Chechens. Lured from his stronghold in Urus-Martan to Groznyy railway station, Mitayev was tricked into entering a train, which immediately started off, carrying him to Rostov, where he was murdered in prison. In autumn 1925 a big military operation launched in Chechenia-Ingushia by Red Army and OGPU troops caught many North Caucasus leaders, including Imam Najmuddin and the Kabardan princes Shipshev, while the Chechen government leadership, including Eldarkhanov, were removed from office. At the same time the long war against Soviet power in Daghestan came to an end, and its leader, ^{c}Ali of Akusha, was executed.[80]

In most Muslim parts of the USSR full-scale persecution of Islam was postponed until 1928, but in North Caucasus it started in 1924.[81] This was probably because this territory lay within the Russian republic, over which Moscow maintained direct control, and because the numbers involved were relatively small: a total of about 1.3 million indigenous people, strung out among the mountains in a strip some 500 miles long and at most 110 miles wide, with approximately 576,200 in Daghestan, 392,600 in Chechenia-Ingushia, and 372,700 in the north-west, including Kabardans, Circassians, Karachays and Balkars. These were small numbers compared with the Tatars and Bashkorts (3.6 million) or the Muslims of Central Asia (more than 10 million). Nevertheless, considering the religious fervour and territorial tenacity of North Caucasus peoples, it would have been wiser for the Bolsheviks to respect counsels of caution proffered by Sultan-^{c}Aliyev and Lenin, rather than antagonize the Muslims. However, by 1920 it was too late to avoid conflict, since the ideological fanaticism of Russia's Bolsheviks and White Volunteer Army had already plunged North Caucasus into civil war. At first the native peoples were disregarded except as a source of auxiliary troops for one side or the other, or mute subjects for incorporation into whatever form of Russian state emerged as the victor. Indeed the North Caucasus peoples realized that their social and religious institutions were as insignificant to the communists as to the Russian imperialists, and that they must fight if they wanted to preserve their land and culture. Perhaps it also helps to explain the early onset of the anti-Islamic campaign in North Caucasus that ‘the predominant role of the Sufi orders in the political, military, cultural and social life of their country…set them up as competitors of the Communist Party'.[82] It was in the nature of the Sufi orders to be elusive: they needed no mosques, and assumed a clandestine role which, with the support of the great majority of the population, allowed them to survive the whole period of communist rule. It is believed that in 1925 70–80% of Chechen men were *murid*s, and indeed Samurskiy wrote that Sufism was in full bloom in Daghestan, where 'the mürids claim to be communists'.[83]

Meanwhile the undermining of Islamic institutions began, as the Ingush and the Chechens accepted the abolition of *shari*^{c}*ah* courts in their autonomous provinces in 1923 and 1926 respectively. In Daghestan customary law based on *shari*^{c}*ah* and ^{c}*adat* was more deeply ingrained: 'The prevalence of clan relations could not be eradicated at one blow by the revolution. This demanded many years of painstaking…work, enlightenment and ideology among the population.' This applied particularly to blood-vengeance, which 'in 1924 accounted for 80% of all crimes of violence – as many as 3,000 cases of killing and wounding per year', involving even men with secondary and higher education, who dared not face the derision attracted by failure to defend the 'honour' of their clan. Customary law and *shari*^{c}*ah* also retarded the emancipation of women by subjecting them completely to the will of their fathers and brothers before marriage and to that of their husbands thereafter. Marriages were arranged by parents without concern for the girl's (or boy's) wishes, often before sexual maturity, and were subject to the usual Islamic customs of polygamy, bride-price and the male's prerogative of divorce. The social strains involved were often exacerbated by the revolutionaries' encouragement to women to break free from the conventions by mixing with men in society, attending schools and colleges and taking employment outside the home – the punishment for which was often murder by the woman's husband or father. Some women who collaborated with the revolutionaries in encouraging others to defy convention suffered particularly by assault, rape or murder.[84]

An important advantage of Russian schools over Muslim *maktab*s was that they allowed girls to receive basic education, so that by 1932 more than 2,250 Chechen girls were at school. A few projects for women's literacy were introduced in Daghestan, but it was only in the 1930s that this became possible on a larger scale. However, such developments were a signal for a new wave of disturbances in Chechenial–Ingushia, in which teachers were attacked and schools damaged. Attendance at school by girls and women, and their subsequent active participation in society, aroused especial wrath in Muslim zealots, so that some girls were frightened off or ostracized by their families. Marriage of girls at an early age, which continued in defiance of the law, also prevented girls from finishing their education. Nevertheless some Daghestani, Chechen and Ingush women did gain professional qualifications, and by the late 1930s occupied responsible posts in the government and KP or as doctors and teachers.[85]

Opposition to female education was especially strong in Chechenia-Ingushia among adherents of the Sufi orders, who prevented practically all girls from completing their eight-year attendance at school so that they would be married according to *shari^cah*. Thereafter they had no hope of going on to higher education or a professional career. Similarly, cases occurred of men procuring underage girls for marriage, which was normal under customary law.[86]

In 1926, following the murder of several Daghestani women by their husbands for walking independently outside their homes, and the issue of several decrees on women's rights both in Moscow and Daghestan, traditional Muslim marriage practices, including bride abduction, enforced marriage, the marriage of minors, bride-price and polygamy, were prohibited. In Daghestan women were kept in seclusion and scarcely allowed out of the house, but at least (in contrast with Azerbaijan) throughout North Caucasus women did not wear the full veil, so that no campaign for discarding it was necessary, except among Azerbaijani and Persian women in Makhachkala and Darband. Another explicitly anti-Islamic act was the creation of a Union of Unbelievers in Ingushia in 1926, combined with atheist propaganda in the press, reporting cases of mullahs recanting their faith.[87]

Bolshevik measures for taming the North Caucasus peoples developed along with preparations for the 1928–32 industrialization plan. Pursuing their idea of integrating the Chechens and other mountain peoples into the industrial proletariat, the communists began recruitment of Chechen and Ingush workers for the oil industry in Groznyy. In 1929, completely disregarding the friction between the Chechens and the Russian oil town and adjacent Cossack settlements on the Sunzha, Moscow decreed that Groznyy and the Chechen AP were united. In another provocative action a pig farm was set up among the Chechens: when the pigs were destroyed, thirty Chechens were arrested as ‘bandits’ and exiled to Siberia.[88]

Further cause for violence came at the end of 1929, when it was decreed that the whole of North Caucasus was among the first regions of the USSR to be collectivized. There was immediate consternation among the Ingush and the lowland

Chechens of Goiti, Benoi and Shali who, however, postponed their revolt in order to protest to a Moscow government which was much less benevolent than they could imagine, as it sent a commission of bogus negotiators, who nearly captured the Chechen leader, Shita Istamulov, in a night attack on his house. However, Chechen reinforcements quickly appeared, 150 OGPU soldiers were killed, and Istamulov called on the Chechens to rise in *jihad* against the Russians. Driven back by overwhelming communist forces, Istamulov's insurgent army withdrew to the mountains, where news reached them of Stalin's proclamation of March 1930, which shifted the blame for the 'mistakes' of mass collectivization on to local officials (who had in fact simply carried out Stalin's orders).[89] With feigned benevolence the KP now decreed that in North Caucasus and elsewhere collectivization was to be slowed down and made easier. The population was suborned with consumer goods, and an amnesty was declared for participants in the uprising. However, this too was a dirty trick. Istamulov, having been invited to receive his amnesty document from the local OGPU chief, was shot by him, but succeeded in killing the officer with his dagger before dying. Such treachery was cause for a blood feud, in which a band led by Istamulov's brother Hasan hunted down OGPU men, while the communists launched a massive pogrom against alleged counter-revolutionary 'kulaks' and 'bourgeois-Islamist nationalists', in which 35,000 Chechen opponents of collectivization are said to have been arrested and either shot or sent to labour camps in northern Russia. In response to Hasan's call for *ghazawat* a wave of revolts spread through Daghestan, Ingushia, Osetia, Kabarda and Karachay-Balkaria. In the desperate fighting the Russians used large Red Army forces and military aircraft to attack the rebels, and an OGPU officer reported that 'the rivers of North Caucasus carried thousands of corpses to the sea'.[90]

In Daghestan too the communists deported 350 ‘kulak’ families (about 1,750 men, women and children) in March 1930, but this fell short of the official plan, which required 1,500 families. A year later one ‘kulak’ group deported from northern Daghestan consisted of 175 households. Much larger numbers of Daghestani deportees are reported for 1935 – 416 families, or c. 2,000 people; and September 1936 – 650 families, or 3,250 persons.[91] South Daghestan also provided many victims: an uprising against collectivization engulfed a huge area of Lezgistan in 1930, and ‘dozens of its best sons died fighting against regular Soviet troops… hundreds of families were arrested and exiled to Siberia or Central Asia’.[92]

The victims of collectivization in Chechenia-Ingushia included some 300,000 livestock slaughtered by the peasants in the usual desperate protest, and the only places in Chechenia where complete collectivization was achieved by 1932 were the Russian Cossack districts of Sunzha and Petropavlovsk. Otherwise the Chechens remained in practice individual peasants, and collective farms existed only on paper. Meanwhile communist officials in Groznyy exacted annual tribute by organized police and OGPU ‘raids’ on villages to seize sheep, and the Chechens knew full well that if they did not surrender their livestock they would be exiled and their homes burned to the ground.[93]

In 1934, after the peak of the collectivization campaign, Samurskiy was reinstated in Daghestan as KP secretary. He resolved to investigate the political and social situation, and soon concluded that the economy was in chaos and that the whole administrative system needed radical overhaul in order to bring it closer to reality, with fewer committee meetings and resolutions.[94] Samurskiy's misgivings were echoed in a Moscow government resolution of January 1936, which reprimanded the authorities in non-Russian provinces for not implementing the all-USSR ‘indigenization’ policy. Native languages were still not being used in organizations and government offices; instead, in official dealings with the public ‘Russian is being used exclusively, despite the fact that many people do not understand it.’[95] At that time the population of Chechenia-Ingushia was 80% native, and in Daghestan more than 90% native. Of 1,310 government officials in North Caucasus only 17 were natives, and Moscow ordered that this must be increased within two years to at least one-third of posts, while Russians in managerial posts must learn the local language. However, this all came to nothing, because the policy of indigenization was already being discarded as Russian nationalism flourished and the 1937 Terror campaign loomed on the horizon.[96]

Osetia and north-west Caucasus

In north-west Caucasus the ethnic situation was different from that in the east: the native population was much less numerous and their settlements more scattered, because of Russia's mass expulsion of the Circassians and their neighbours to Turkey.[97] The Russians in Kuban and Stavropol provinces and western Terek, however, were much more numerous, with half a dozen large towns, and total population and density of inhabitants at least twice that in the east. North-west Caucasus was, moreover, a highly militarized region, with the Kuban Cossack Host totalling more than 1.3 million persons – four times the population of the Terek Host.[98] The scattering of Cossack settlements among the native peoples throughout Kuban province had undermined ethnic cohesion among the Circassians

(Adygeys, Cherkes and Kabardans) and the Turkic Karachays and Balkars, but there was still much fighting spirit left in the remaining communities. Even in the 1920s all North Caucasian men still carried and used weapons, especially daggers, which the authorities still hesitated to prohibit,[99] and some anti-communist 'bandits' were active in Kabarda as late as 1928. Islam, although ubiquitous, was less fervent here than in Chechenia-Ingushia and Daghestan.[100] Nevertheless, the 1920s brought persecution, including not only prohibition of the Hajj, but 'of intercourse with the external world, particularly with old emigrés in Turkey and the Arab countries. Even correspondence with relatives in those countries was regarded as a crime.'[101]

The population of multi-ethnic north-west Caucasus included the Iranian-speaking, mainly Christian Osetians; the Kabardans and other Circassian peoples, including the Abkhaz south of the mountains; considerable communities of Karachay and Balkar Muslims; and some nomadic Nogays. There were also small numbers of Mountain Jews, specializing as traders; Armenian communities in several provinces, including North Osetia, Abkhazia, Krasnodar, Stavropol and Rostov-on-Don; and immigrants from Daghestan including Kubacha and Lak metal-workers, and descendants of Kumuks brought in by the Russians for the subjugation of Kabarda. There were also several colonies of German settlers, totalling some 40,000. When the Mountain ASSR was formed in 1921 its western components were the ethnic territories of the Karachays, Kabardans, Balkars, Digor Osetians (Muslim) and Iron Osetians (Christian). The North Osetians' two national regions within the Mountain ASSR were soon combined to form Vladikavkaz National Region, renamed in 1924 the North Osetian AP.[102] Other ethnic-administrative territories also changed: by the time the

Mountain ASSR was abolished, the Kabardans and Balkars were united in one AP, as were the Karachays and Cherkes – although the latter were separated again in 1926. The national territories of the north-east and north-west were subordinated to a single North Caucasus Territory in 1924, but in 1936 the North Osetian and Kabarda-Balkarian APs were 'promoted' to ASSR status. The native communities in these territories were small, altogether numbering about 421,500, and only the Osetians and Kabardans amounted to more than 100,000 each in their respective homelands.[103]

One of the 'social transformations' carried out in North Caucasus, which applied to all of the native peoples, was literacy. It was said that of all Kabardans and Cherkes 'in 1913 only 2–3% could read and write'[104] – although sixty-five *maktab*s and *madrasah*s giving a Koranic Arabic education had existed in Kabarda long before 1917, so that the communist assertion of 97% illiteracy must refer only to knowledge of the Russian language. Nevertheless, poverty, ignorance, superstition and cultural backwardness were the rule in North Caucasus – as in Russia itself. After the Civil War literacy campaigns began and many new secular schools were opened. In addition, a residential centre for training young Kabardans for professional and political posts was founded in 1923 in their administrative centre, Nalchik, including medical, agricultural and political training colleges. In the 1930s a drive for universal literacy and secondary education brought teacher-training colleges for the Kabardans, Karachays and Cherkes, and higher education became available in Rostov-on-Don.[105]

As a result of these educational opportunities – in part mentally liberating, but also ideologically shackling – many young Kabardans, including women, abandoned Islam. By

1932 – despite opposition from the mullahs – some 24,000 Kabardan women had attained basic literacy. Some extended their education through involvement in village councils (which were hotbeds of communist propaganda)[106] so that 'Women stood out as enthusiastic builders of the new culture: more than 100 hold such official posts as chairmen and deputies of councils.'[107] Women's emancipation was part of a cultural revolution which swept away many of the foundations of the highly traditional, patriarchal social system, based on Islamic law (*shari*^{c}*ah* and ^{c}*adat*) and the unwritten Kabardan rules of behaviour (*Adyge khabze*), which had dominated all native peoples of the region.[108] The practices most unacceptable to Russians – blood-vengeance (less common here than in the eastern Caucasus), bride abduction, marriage of minors, coercive marriage, bride-price and polygamy – were already forbidden before 1917, and became criminal offences in the RSFSR law code of 1928. As in north-eastern Caucasus, women did not wear the full veil, but out-of-doors their hair was always covered by a kerchief which could be drawn across the face in the presence of men. However, seclusion of women was the norm, as was absolute submission to the men of the family, so that women who broke away from these conventions faced severe censure from mullahs and relatives. Nevertheless the Bolsheviks were determined to enforce equal rights for women, through 'commissions for the amelioration of life and work for women of the mountain region' and other organizations. Women's clubs disseminated information about health, hygienic childbirth and diet, and mother-and-child clinics were established. In addition, opportunities for employment in collective farms, workshops and industry enabled some native women to escape from the shackles of the patriarchal extended family, while involvement in conferences and elections widened their social experience.[109] In contrast with Chechenia-Ingushia and Daghestan, the KP claimed that in north-west Caucasus, ‘Where Islam had arrived comparatively recently and had not become deeply rooted, quite large numbers of people began to desert it…for instance, among the Muslim Osetians and the Adygeys…where by the late 1920s nothing remained of Islamic religiosity except customary rituals interwoven with relics of pre-Islamic beliefs.’[110] However, all this also resulted in the destruction of mosques by ‘youth’ incited by their KP elders.[111]

As everywhere else, Russia's communist ‘cultural revolution’ in north-west Caucasus affected the native languages. Arabic script had been used for nearly all of them before 1918, and only three had been written in the Cyrillic alphabet: Osetian since the eighteenth century, Kabardan from the 1840s (various versions, scarcely competing with Arabic) and Abkhazian regularly from the second half of the nineteenth century. (The Circassian aristocracy wrote in Turkish.) Since none of the other languages – Adygey, Circassian, Abaza, Karachay, Balkar and Nogay – had received an alphabet capable of representing their sounds adequately, in the 1920s the Soviet régime attempted to devise for them alphabets based on the ‘revolutionary’ Latin alphabet. Literary languages were developed, in which periodicals and books began to be published – especially in Kabarda and Osetia. The Osetians, because of their division into northern and southern communities, underwent a confusing number of changes: since 1844 their language had been written in the Russian alphabet (with a Georgian variant in South Osetia); in 1925 Cyrillic was replaced with the Latin alphabet for all Osetians; and in 1938 this was replaced again by Cyrillic – except in South Osetia, where the Georgian alphabet was again employed. Most north-west Caucasus nationalities had to change their alphabets again in

1936–8 during the general imposition of the Russian alphabet. As the numerous languages of North Caucasus and Daghestan are phonetically complicated and very different from Russian, their new alphabets looked rather makeshift, with a liberal sprinkling of the Latin capital ‘I’ and Russian hard and soft signs – with total disregard for aesthetic appearance (which is essential for readable print) or consistency between the various languages.[112]

Linked with the creation of alphabets was the principle of ‘indigenization’ of the administration, but up to 1929 progress in the development of Circassian written languages was slow, and the involvement of Adygeys and Kabardans in local councils and administration had declined rather than increased. Nevertheless, in 1929 the Adygey Congress resolved that Adygey must become the business language in local councils and offices by January 1930. Similarly unrealistic was the RSFSR decree of 1931 that stipulated the use of the native languages for official business throughout North Caucasus by 1933. In fact, so far only 48 officials out of 153 (31.4%) in district offices, and 282 out of 1,299 (21.7%) in the provincial bureaucracy were Circassians. Indigenization had increased so little by 1936 that the territory received a reprimand (equally fantastic) from the Moscow government,[113] as if a pretence of carrying out the ‘progressive’ but impracticable scheme had to be maintained. In any case indigenization was about to be made irrelevant by the Russian Communist Party's reign of terror, so that the only use made of the reprimand may have been in the NKVD's fabrication of charges against North Caucasian officials.

Collectivization too engulfed the peoples of north-western Caucasus as disastrously as everywhere else, since its non-

Russian peoples were collectivized by the same methods as the great mass of Russian, Ukrainian and other rural inhabitants, including Cossacks. As a Circassian historian points out, 'the Kremlin…did not discriminate between different regions', although significant differences existed; in central Russia for centuries the 'elements of individualism and private and personal initiative…had been dulled…[and] the former serfs…did not reach a high enough level of economic well-being to become ardent supporters of private property', whereas 'most Caucasian peasants were better off than the peasants of central Russia'. In North Caucasus, as in Ukraine, possessing 'a pair of horses and several cows' was the norm for 'every middle peasant household', and many owned houses with tiled or iron roofs – which was sufficient reason for the Bolshevik collectivizers to categorize most of them as 'kulaks', who were to be 'rendered destitute without pity'.[114]

In some parts of north-west Caucasus, e.g. Kabarda, a few collective farms had been created through the voluntary co-operative movement of the early 1920s, but when Moscow issued its command that North Caucasus was to be among the first wave of mass collectivization it prescribed a timetable. The first victims were to be the Russian and Ukrainian farmers, along with the North Osetians and Adygeys, who were to be collectivized by the end of 1930; next the grain-growing farms of lowland Kabarda and Cherkesia, by spring of 1931; and lastly the mountain districts of Karachay, Kabarda, Balkaria and Osetia by the end of 1931. As everywhere, 'mistakes and distortions of the Communist Party line' quickly emerged. These included the insane decision by KP officials in North Osetia that the whole province must be turned into one big collective by spring 1930. Accordingly, the Digors had their eleven villages combined into one 'agro-industrial combine', and their inhabitants were supposedly organized as communes where all personal property was socialized.[115] In the Adygey AP when collectivization was decreed, delegations of village elders went to Krasnodar and other towns to petition the local communist chiefs, and were promptly arrested and sent to labour camps for ‘agitation against the Soviet régime’. The following spring, at the height of the campaign, Adygey women organized a march on Krasnodar, but were stopped and sent back; some were then put in prison, although the imprisonment of women was contrary to all North Caucasian ethics. The Adygey villages were then inundated with communist agitators, painting a glorious picture of collective-farm life and representing all sceptics as saboteurs. Despite almost universal opposition, ‘terrorism and threats prevailed in the end’, and communities were induced to sign resolutions saying that all working peasants wished to join the kolkhoz, and that those who opposed collectivization were ‘kulaks’.

One feature of collectivization which all peasants resented was that once a collective was formed it had to carry dozens of administrators – ‘the kolkhoz chairman; his deputy; a secretary; a book-keeper; tally men; [and] team leaders’, as well as a KP secretary, and the chairman, deputy chairman, secretary and bookkeeper of the village soviet. ‘Medical and postal officials, militiamen, and other state functionaries were also on the ration strength of the collective farm.’ All of these non-productive people were a drain on the farm's earnings, most of which in any case went to the state as ‘tax’. For the Adygey people the main result of the KP's decrees was that in 1930 their province became notorious for the extraordinary number of its inhabitants (12% of all adults) who were dubbed ‘kulaks’ and ‘reactionaries’ and so were deprived of civil rights and exiled. Thus collectivization lurched on, despite its manifest absurdity and inhumanity, so that ‘By methods of sheer administrative compulsion 84.2% of Cherkes farms and 39.8% of Karachays were combined into collectives by March 1930’ – but only eight months later (as everywhere else) these numbers had fallen to 10.4% and 3.7% respectively, as peasants abandoned the new farms. Similarly, Kabarda experienced a large reduction of collective farms from 70% in February 1930 to 13.6% in May.[116]

The KP could not have enforced collectivization without a large number of active collaborators devoid of sympathy for farmers. In other parts of the USSR much use was made of ‘committees of poor peasants’, but these are scarcely mentioned in north-western Caucasus where, moreover, communists were very few and far between. However, another source of KP influence on the peasantry – Russian industrial workers – was easily tapped. While enterprises located in the native territories provided a few worker-collectivizers, e.g. from North Osetia's lead and zinc workings and railway maintenance yards, the North Caucasus Territory communists had to import politically hardened workers from farther afield. Miners from Ukraine (Luhansk and Kryvyy Rih) were brought to North Osetia; miners from Luhansk and workers from Rostov came to Kabarda-Balkaria; and Rostov sent sheet-metal workers and tramway employees to teach the farmers of Cherkesia and Karachay.[117] While in Russia itself most industrial workers themselves had recently been peasants, those drafted into north-western Caucasus were neither sympathetic to the native peoples nor familiar with their working conditions or social customs.

Consequently the flame of insurrection against collectivization which began in Ingushia and Chechenia in December 1929 spread westward. ‘The Soviet attitude…

toward their citizens did not accord with the Caucasians' outlook on law and morality. The people considered this act of the Soviets as "the work of the devil" against which it was the duty of every Moslem to fight.'[118] In North Osetia resistance to collectivization involved clan territories and loyalties, so that 'while outwardly accepting collectivization, [farm chairmen] tried to transform the Kolkhoz into an instrument of their respective clans…act[ing] on the principle "I decide who is a kulak and an enemy of the state and who is not."' In Osetia peasants 'waged a sort of guerrilla warfare against "socialist property"',[119] using 'propaganda, blackmail, sabotage, etc.…in an attempt to frustrate… government measures'. They banded together to kill communist activists, raided the farms of peasant-collaborators, and attacked OGPU troops drafted in to the province.[120] Kabarda too had its 'nationalists', who supposedly insinuated themselves into rural institutions in order to 'distribute to kulaks hundreds of acres of land'. The largest Kabardan revolt occurred in 1928, when Prince Temirkan Shipshev emerged from hiding to lead a large band in raiding collective farms, burning their barns, driving cattle off into the mountains, plundering state storehouses and killing communist activists. It was the Balkars of Baksan gorge, however, who staged the most serious insurrection, during which they killed one of the most dedicated local communists, Ahmad Musukayev, and occupied the mountain districts, 'which in a few days were swept clean of Communists…the Balkars seized all the mountain passes and could easily repel advancing Soviet forces'.[121] In Karachay and Cherkesia the communists blamed mullahs and aristocrats, who supposedly played on religious fanaticism and clan loyalty to incite the anti-collectivization revolt of March 1930 – although this was supported not only by the 'middle peasantry', but also by landless and poor peasants. A particularly big part in suppressing this revolt was said to have been played by the Komsomol, but revolts against collectivization and other Bolshevik innovations were generally crushed by OGPU and Red Army troops using field guns, tanks and aircraft.[122]

As everywhere, the fate of those labelled 'kulaks' was confiscation of their property and 'expulsion [with] their families to remote, barren plots of land…The most inveterate kulaks and counter-revolutionary elements were to be deported beyond the confines of the [North Caucasus] territory' – which usually meant the Far North of Russia or Siberia.[123] The KP stepped up its pressure on farmers to meet arbitrary grain-production targets, state 'plenipotentiaries' were sent to lagging villages to threaten the Cossacks and peasants – not only native Caucasians, but also Russian and Ukrainian settlers – and, in cases where no results were achieved, men were arrested, 'saboteurs' found and hostages shot. In November 1932--January 1933 in Krasnodar province 100,000 people were arrested, more than 8,000 shot and at least 63,500 deported to the Far North, while 'In Karachai and Balkaria alone there were 3,000 executions.'[124] An eyewitness described scenes at a railway station in North Caucasus in January 1930, as 'kulak' families were deported:

> The whole square before the station, the nearby streets, the platform and open ground on both sides of the track were crowded with children, women and men. Poorly dressed, many in nothing but rags, they were kept there in the bitter frost for days on end… Many held icons and prayed fervently for God's help… Similar scenes were repeated at every station all the way to Rostov: the peasant families of the Russian

> districts of Stavropol, Terek, Kuban and Don provinces were on their way into exile.[125]

Peasants who lived by rearing sheep and cattle in the mountains of Karachay, Balkaria and North Osetia resorted to the one protest which lay in the power of peasants everywhere in the USSR: at least to cheat the communists of their livestock by slaughtering them. Thus in North Osetia during the winter of 1929–30 the numbers cattle were reduced by 25.8%, pigs by 44.3%, sheep by 47.5%, and new offspring by 59.5%. In Kabarda 80,000 head of cattle were destroyed by their owners in January 1930. Numbers of livestock in Karachay too were reduced drastically: cattle by 10%, horses by 25.7%, and sheep and goats by 17% (in places 32%). Notwithstanding these huge losses, the communist authorities forced collectivization through ruthlessly, so that it could be claimed, for instance, that by 1932 over 89% of lowland Osetia was collectivized and the 'kulaks' had been 'liquidated'. As everywhere in the USSR, this claim of successful social revolution was endlessly celebrated in the Soviet press, while the fact of its inglorious culmination – the man-made famine of 1932–4, in which North Caucasus was among the most severely affected areas – was totally suppressed. In Krasnodar Province farmers died in their thousands, and the total deaths from hunger in North Caucasus territory have been estimated at one million.[126] As a North Caucasus historian points out, 'even if it turned out that the number of deaths from famine was considerably smaller, this would not lessen the significance of the tragedy and the responsibility of the [Communist] party…for its occurrence'.[127]

Problems of ethnic relations and demarcation of territorial boundaries in north-west Caucasus were considerable. Here too the inherent conflict between provincial autonomy and control by the Russian communist metropolis caused disillusionment in the native territories, as the direct contact with the Moscow government which they enjoyed at first through their local representatives was removed and their concerns were diverted to the KP regional headquarters in Rostov-on-Don – an intermediate tier of administration interposed between each North Caucasus AP and the capital, which inhibited communication. In north-west Caucasus anti-Russian feeling was widespread, as were disagreements between neighbouring indigenous peoples. Between 1921 and 1925, inter-ethnic issues dealt with by the Soviet authorities included discrimination against Kabardan peasants by Russians in towns, friction between Terek Cossacks, Kabardans and Osetians, conflicts between Karachays and Kuban Cossacks, cattle-rustling between Karachays and Balkars, intense prejudice and 'banditry' between Osetians and Ingush, and the Kabardans' and Balkars' tense high-altitude relations with the Svans of northern Georgia, including occasional killings. The Vladikavkaz Soviet showed earnest, if unrealistic, complacency about the friction between Cossack *stanitsa*s and the Osetians, by informing the Cossacks that their request for special representatives was not justified, because there were 'no Russians and non-Russians, but simply citizens of the region'.[128] Clearly communist leaders held the naive belief that the latent inter-ethnic conflicts could be transformed into concord by ideological exhortations.

An example of the real limitations to KP 'nationalities policy' in practice was the formation of the Kabarda-Balkar ASSR and Karachay-Cherkes AP, which separated the

Kabardans from the ‘Cherkes’ (both Circassian peoples) and the Balkars from the Karachays (both Turkic peoples) in different administrative territories, instead of combining them according to linguistic and cultural affiliation into a Kabarda-Cherkes territory and a Karachay-Balkar territory.[129] This was impracticable because of the geographical and economic facts. The Kabardans and Balkars live in the valleys of the eastward-trending Terek basin, while the Cherkes and Karachay belong to the westward-flowing Kuban basin, and these two river systems are separated by the massif of Mount Elbrus. As communication naturally runs along the valleys, not across precipitous watersheds, it was realistic to combine the Karachay and Cherkes into one territory, and the Kabardans and Balkars into another, thus creating geographical units which were viable economically, as they provided the necessary combination of summer and winter grazing on mountain and lowland pastures.

As we have seen, the Osetians were anomalous among the North Caucasus peoples because more of them (the Iron) professed Christianity than Islam (the Digor) – albeit Osetians of both persuasions sometimes returned to more ancient Animist beliefs. In their political views the Osetians were generally pro-Russian. They were also the one nationality which straddled the high Caucasus range, their northern community (c. 136,000) living in the North Osetian territory of the RSFSR, whereas those living as citizens of the Georgian republic on the southern side of the mountains (c. 130,000, of whom only 60,000 lived compactly in the South Osetian Autonomous Province)[130] and the rest were scattered in Tbilisi and other towns. The South Osetian Autonomous Province was created in 1922, and the North Osetian AP not until 1924. This division along a mountain frontier, which was also an inter-republican frontier, created complications. North Osetia's location on the Terek made it important to the Russians for guarding the Military Road to Georgia, and this greatly benefited the Christian Osetians, since a certain bias against Muslim peoples who had defied the Russians was always present in Moscow's policy, as was the contrary tendency to favour the Osetians and Kabardans, who had often collaborated with Russia. The north Osetians naturally gravitated towards Vladikavkaz, the Russian army command centre and capital for the North Caucasian native aristocracy.[131] During the Russian Civil War, however, when Vladikavkaz was occupied alternately by Bolshevik and White forces, the local Osetians and Ingush suffered, whichever side they supported.

Subordination to Georgia brought complications for the South Osetians during the Russian Civil War. Being chiefly peasants, they desired above all land and freedom from landowners’ exactions, and from summer 1917 the presence of a strong native contingent of Russian army deserters stimulated revolutionary militancy, especially when the Tbilisi Provisional Government ordered them to surrender their weapons in March 1918. As the Russian Civil War developed and Georgia's Menshevik leadership declared independence, a number of south Osetian Bolsheviks and Left SRs formed their own National Council, headed by V. Sanakoyev. They were then caught between two fires, as the Georgian government ordered them to cease their revolutionary activity, while the Whites in North Caucasus demanded their collaboration in establishing a base for the invasion of independent Georgia. Refusing to help Denikin, South Osetia's National Council under its Bolshevik leadership became a base for guerrilla warfare, and by early 1920 its partisans were allied with North Osetian detachments against Denikin in the north, while also defending the Caucasus passes against Georgian troops sent to close them against Bolshevik incursions via North Osetia.

In May 1920 South Osetian Bolsheviks declared Soviet power in Ruk-Vaneli district, and its union with Soviet Russia. Although the RSFSR and Menshevik Georgia had just signed a non-interference agreement, Moscow demanded the withdrawal of Georgian troops from South Osetia – hypocritically asserting the latter's right to self-determination at the same time as it was undermining Georgia's elected government. The South Osetians' revolutionary fervour was further demonstrated when, even as they were holding the Caucasus passes against the Georgians, a whole South Osetian brigade was sent north to Vladikavkaz to combat the White Russians. Georgia's threat of retribution against the families of these troops made the South Osetians then decide to take over their own land for Bolshevism. In May 1920 the South Osetian brigade moved south across the mountains, routing the Georgians, and proclaimed Soviet power.[132]

As the Osetians received no help from Russia in challenging the Georgians at this time, the Georgian government 'set about destroying South Osetia as a national entity'[133] by sending its National Guard to attack the Bolsheviks there. They sacked the main town, Tskhinvali, executed Osetian communists, burned villages and forced more than 20,000 Osetians to flee to North Osetia in February 1921. The Bolshevik subjugation of Georgia brought some relief to South Osetia, and protection by the Red Army from further Georgian assaults. Land reform was among the first measures introduced in what was now the Georgian SSR, and evicted Osetians were able to return. Bolshevik pressure overcame the Georgian nationalist resistance to South Osetian autonomy, and the territory was proclaimed an autonomous province within Georgia in April 1922.[134]

Meanwhile in North Caucasus the Russian government's creation of formal ethnic administrative territories continued, with the designation in 1922–4 of autonomous provinces for the Chechens, Ingush, Kabardans and other Circassians, and the upgrading of northern Osetia to an AP.

After the Bolsheviks’ seizure of power in October 1917 they had quickly proceeded to the organization of autonomous national territories, because national self-determination was one of Lenin's stated political principles, and the desire for ethnic autonomy was so strong among the subject peoples of the Russian Empire. Under the Provisional Government the Finns and the Ukrainians were the first to assert their intention of liberating themselves from Russian domination and, after their declarations of independence in November and December 1917, several other countries quickly followed suit, including Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia between March and May 1918.[135] As the Red Army gradually crushed local opposition, Soviet republics replaced these young democratic states, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was created in December 1922. In the case of the first six Soviet republics outside ethnic Russia – Ukraine, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Abkhazia – the fiction was created that they voluntarily agreed to form a union and that each concluded a peace treaty with the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic, defining their mutual frontiers. Other fictions incorporated into the first USSR Constitution (1924) were that, despite having been dragged into the imperial bonds again, each union republic or soviet socialist republic (SSR) was an ‘independent state’ with its own constitution, enjoying territorial ‘sovereignty’ (apart from foreign relations, military matters, economic planning, etc.!), and that each possessed the right to secede from the Union.[136] In addition to the union republics, several other levels of ethnic administrative territories were elaborated, mostly within the RSFSR. These, in descending magnitude, were:

(a) autonomous soviet socialist republics (ASSRs), e.g. the Tatar, Crimean, Daghestan and Mountain ASSRs. These, too, were nominally 'states', but differed from SSRs in not possessing sovereignty or the 'right' to secede from the RSFSR, and in lacking external borders with foreign countries.[137]
(b) autonomous provinces (APs) of ethnically homogeneous communities within SSRs, e.g. those of the Kalmyks, Kabardans, Adygeys, Karachays and Highland Karabagh, had even less autonomy.[138]
(c) national regions (NRs) were territories with population consisting of a single nationality, e.g. at first two for North Osetians.
(d) national districts (NDs) – even smaller ethnic territories based on compact settlements of a small nationality, e.g. Circassians; or to 'protect and develop the linguistic and cultural rights of minorities' forming diasporas in other republics, e.g. Jews, Germans and Poles. By the early 1930s there were 120 NDs in the RSFSR and 28 in Ukraine.

The formation of the USSR was a protracted process governed largely by local circumstances, and its constituent parts were not fixed once and for all: the various categories of republic, province, region, etc. which appeared on the map of the USSR were worked out in the course of the 1920s and 1930s: 'and their contours were being modified almost continually'.[139]

Much scepticism about ‘Leninist nationalities policy’ and the benevolence of the Soviet state towards its non-Russian peoples has been expressed, with justification, both by foreign observers and by representatives of the USSR's subject peoples. The Chechen scholar Abdurrahman Avtorkhanov, for instance, wrote:

> After the seizure of power over Russia, Lenin considered it his life's mission to carry out…two experiments without precedent in history: firstly, to build a classless socialist society, by means of direct violence (‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’) and, secondly, to make more than 190 peoples, differing in race, language and religion, into a single communist nation with a single language and a single atheist faith, by means of indirect violence (ideological re-education, linguistic assimilation and the ‘internationalization’ of races and families).[140]

Despite the recognition of national republics and other territories, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were against federalism and for a unitary state,[141] so that the main concern of the USSR Constitution of 1924 was with the *Union*. Although this was said to be ‘a voluntary association of peoples enjoying equal rights’ (including, for union republics, freedom to secede), in practice it meant the recreation of the empire under the jurisdiction of the Russian metropolis – only with a greater degree of centralization than before, in order to facilitate the ‘general plan for the entire economy of the Union’. The right of secession – ‘the very hallmark of what they describe as the “sovereignty” of the member republics’

– appears to have been ‘a right granted in the knowledge that it would not have to be honoured’.[142]

Nevertheless, the granting of some degree of autonomy not only to, for example, Ukraine and the peoples of Transcaucasia and Turkestan, but also to dozens of smaller national communities, mainly within the Russian Republic itself, appeared to be an important break with Russian imperial tradition, which had recognized only ‘Russia one and indivisible’ (i.e. the whole empire) and disregarded ethnic territories. Yet, despite Lenin's manipulation of the nationalities situation for Bolshevik political ends, his dealings with the non-Russian peoples were not entirely devoid of principle and even a certain utopian idealism. The Bolshevik government had inherited nationality problems from an empire in which ‘oppression by tsarism and the Great-Russian bourgeoisie has left our neighbours with a profound animosity and distrust towards all Russians, and this distrust will have to be dispelled by deeds and not words’.[143]

From 1918 onward the drawing of precise borders between provinces and national territories was pursued painstakingly, and apparently with great scrupulousness:

> Anyone who studies the material on the creation of the national republics and provinces cannot but see what a complex, laborious and time-consuming task this was. A scholarly approach was essential in order to ascertain the territories occupied by various peoples – which in many cases was far from simple where there was…a mixture of nationalities.[144]

One specific example in the Caucasus was that of the Adygey Circassians living south of the Kuban near Krasnodar, to which in 1922 Moscow accorded AP status, separate from the Mountain Republic. Totalling approximately 100,000 people, the Adygeys lacked any towns or native administration and were fragmented among numerous Cossack settlements. The administrative structure of Kuban province inherited from tsarist Russia was based on Cossack 'divisions' (*otdely*) and regiments – now to be overlaid by Soviet executive committees which scarcely affected the indigenous people, as they had no 'proletariat' or communists. Consequently, although the 65,300 Adygeys in the territory allotted to them on the rivers Kuban and Laba constituted 51% of the inhabitants, they had to engage in prolonged controversy with the Russian authorities of Kuban--Black Sea province, to persuade them to recognize the Adygeys' right to autonomy. The small strip of territory originally allocated to them included most of the Bzhedukh and Temirgoy tribes, some Shapsugs and remnants of two others, but the majority of Shapsugs living between there and the Black Sea were excluded. The difficulties placed in the Kuban Adygeys' way illustrate Bolshevik treatment of small ethnic communities: when (against the wishes of local Russian settlers) they were granted a nominal national territory, its autonomy was reduced to the minimum by the provincial Soviet administration, so that it 'possess[ed] ill-defined rights but precise obligations'. The Moscow government maintained its authority over them by frequent administrative restructuring of their territories and by fostering the illusion that they might obtain higher status at some later date. Thus the merely nominal autonomy of the Adygey NP contrasted strongly with the real power which Krasnodar and Moscow (and later Rostov) possessed over it.[145] Subsequently the territory of the Adygey NP was enlarged twice (without any improvement in status): in 1936 it was extended southward to include the oil town of Maykop, with its considerable Russian population, which made the Adygeys a minority in their own territory. (As late as 1960 further extension of Adygey territory added the whole valley of the river Belaya up to the high Caucasus ridge, but left the Adygeys as a minority of 23% among the predominantly Russian population.)[146]

Although the strength of Islam in north-western Caucasus was less than in Chechenia and Daghestan, it was still a relevant factor, especially among the Adygeys who, unlike other Circassians, were considered by the Russians to be ‘fanatical’ and far from reconciled with communist rule. To the discomfiture of the Bolsheviks, district soviet elections in September 1922, with very low turnout, produced a majority of Adygey deputies, many of whom were considered to be ‘random elements’ – i.e. non-Bolsheviks and Muslims. Even though this result was rejected and the election rules changed so as to deprive various categories of citizen of the right to vote, the subsequent election of 533 deputies for the Adygey district soviets still produced 318 Circassians, 214 Russians and only 18 communists. The Bolsheviks’ explanation for this continuing support for anti-Bolshevik candidates was ‘the persistence of age-old traditions, religious fanaticism, the active participation of kulaks and mullahs, the absence of women's rights and the lack of any KP organization in rural districts’. However, in 1926 alterations to constituencies and systematic propaganda produced results which the Bolsheviks could accept, as the number of Adygey communists rose to 176 out of a total membership of 756 in the province. Of the other Muslim communities in north-west Caucasus the Karachays were considered the most conservative, and they were strongly anti-Russian. The Kabardans still enjoyed high status in the North Caucasus, but did not combine this with any spirit of

Islamic leadership. Consequently there were few Sufi *murids*, and less Muslim opposition to secular education and women's emancipation in Kabarda than elsewhere in north-west Caucasus.[147]

By 1937 the balance of ethnic groups in the non-Russian territories of north-west Caucasus had altered considerably as a result of an influx of mainly Russian industrial managers, workers and officials. The biggest change was in North Osetia, where Osetians now constituted only 50.3% of the population and Russians 37.2%, In Kabarda-Balkaria the proportion of native peoples had fallen to 53.5% while that of the Russians and Ukrainians reached 26%. The increase in Russians residing in north-west Caucasus was mainly the result of industrial development, especially the extraction of minerals in the high Caucasus west of the Terek. North Osetia's Sadon mines on the river Ardon, worked since the nineteenth century (and operated latterly by a Belgian company) were still the USSR's most important producers of lead, zinc, copper and other non-ferrous metals. Geological surveying from 1928 onwards rediscovered at Tyrny-auz in the Balkarian mountains a massive source of non-ferrous metals, especially molybdenum and tungsten, which was exploited from 1940 onwards, while chromium, nickel and gold occurred in the Malka valley. These resources were of great military value to the Moscow government but, as producers of strategic materials of ‘all-union significance’ they brought little or no benefit to the territories in which they were located. On the other hand, industrial development in North Caucasus drew some of the local peoples into industrial employment and Russian social influence.[148]

Georgia, Armenia and the ‘Transcaucasian Federation’

After subduing the three South Caucasus republics Stalin and Orjonikidze urged their amalgamation into a single federated republic, ostensibly for economic reasons. Naturally, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan all opposed this strongly, as any federation would deprive them of individual autonomy. The question of the ‘Transcaucasian Federation’ is sometimes presented as a debate on equal terms between Moscow and Tbilisi, but Lenin's party demonstrated its centralizing, dictatorial intention by consistently excluding the Georgian KP Committee from its discussions. In Georgia national feelings ran so high that when Stalin visited Tbilisi in July 1921 he was met by an extremely hostile demonstration which increased his malice towards his homeland, and his order for an immediate purge of the Georgian KP also caused anxiety in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Moreover, within the Georgian republic local nationalism was stirring, as not only the Abkhazians and Achars (who had shown separatist tendencies during the First World War) but also the Megrelians and Svans demanded autonomy based on their well-defined territories and languages distinct from Georgian. Resistance to the ‘Transcaucasian Federation’, however, was expressed mainly by Georgia's Bolshevik revolutionary committee, which in January 1922 asserted its sole authority in the republic, and in late February the Georgian Congress of Soviets approved a republican constitution stating that Georgia was a sovereign state which would not permit any foreign power (viz. Russia) to claim authority on its territory – an unambiguous assertion of the heresy of ‘national communism’.[149]

Thus ‘Transcaucasia’, and Georgia in particular, loomed large in the Moscow Bolsheviks’ political preoccupations: several of Lenin's closest associates – Kirov, Orjonikidze and Stalin – had made their names in the Caucasus and maintained strong links with it even from their offices in Moscow. Grigori Orjonikidze, as head of the KP's Caucasian Bureau, had been deputed by Lenin to propagate the idea of federalization of South Caucasus, but he came to see himself as ‘the real ruler of Georgia’ and in 1922 started acting like a ‘tsarist governor’, treating the Georgian KP Committee in a high-handed way, and excluding them from discussion of projected developments. In the ensuing squabble Lenin at first took Orjonikidze's side, but after investigation he realized that the fault was Orjonikidze's.[150] For the ailing Lenin this disagreement among his henchmen became the subject of his last expressed concerns about the régime he had created. In particular, he advised that while a union of soviet republics was essential, this should apply ‘only in the military and diplomatic spheres…in all other respects restoring the full independence of the separate commissariats’, and that Russians should avoid ‘rudeness or injustice to our own minorities…[and] imperialistic attitudes towards them’.[151]

How Lenin's colleagues intended to deal with unsubmissive national communists was demonstrated in Georgia in March 1922, when they bypassed the Georgian Communist Party by inducing the three South Caucasian republics’ Congresses of Soviets to sign a treaty of federation, and downgrading the party's Caucasian Bureau to a ‘Transcaucasian Regional Committee’. Defying this cabal, the Georgian KP resolved in October 1922 to enter the Soviet Union directly as a separate union republic, and abolish the federation project. Lenin handed the matter over to Stalin and, when the whole

Georgian KP Committee resigned, Orjonikidze immediately installed a new committee of his own disciples. Thus the 'Transcaucasian Federal Republic' came into being on 13 December 1922, two weeks before the proclamation of the USSR.[152]

In Georgia, national pride rose against renewed subjection to the Russian metropolis, and rebellious patriots formed an Independence Committee, chaired in succession by G. Paghava, N. Kartsivadze and K. Androniḳashvili. Their activities were quickly suppressed by the arrest of its 'Military Centre' leaders, including Generals K. Apkhazi, A. Androniḳashvili, V. Tṣulukidze and R. Muskhelishvili, and their execution in May 1923. Meanwhile in April 1922 the Georgian Orthodox Patriarch Amvrosi had sent a letter to the Allies' Conference in Genoa protesting against Soviet Russian occupation of Georgia. The brutality of communist zealots against the Georgian Orthodox Church began when Amvrosi and several bishops were subjected to one of the USSR's first 'show trials', staged in a Tbilisi theatre, while an organized mob called for their execution. In fact the patriarch was imprisoned for a year, but Moscow's anti-religious campaign continued (from 1926 under Beria's supervision), until by 1940 practically all Georgian churches and monasteries were closed, and many demolished.[153] The Independence Committee's long-awaited uprising, led by Colonel Kaykhosro Choloqashvili, broke out in August 1924, mostly in western Georgia, but quickly collapsed from lack of popular support, and communist suppression of the insurgents was savage. Those who could escaped to western Europe, including the historian of the movement, Solomon Zaldasṭanishvili, but most of the leaders were executed, almost 4,000 other participants were killed, and many thousands of prisoners and hostages were subsequently murdered or sent to the Communist Party's concentration camps in northern Russia.[154] Thus in Georgia communist Terror began in the early 1920s, but was followed by a breathing space during which Georgian KP organizations were able to maintain relatively independent and liberal policies.

Not only considerations of political and economic centralization, but also of international strategy, underlay the Bolshevik government's insistence on federating Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia against the will of their population. By the spring of 1922 Soviet relations with Turkey had deteriorated, chiefly because expediency could not disguise the inherent antagonism between the intensely nationalist aims of Kemal and the world-conquering ambitions of the Bolsheviks. The creation of a strong, unified frontier province of Soviet Russia in the Caucasus would confront Turkey with a convincing barrier.[155] Azerbaijan's acceptance of the 'Transcaucasian Federal Republic' was rewarded by Moscow's decree of November 1924 confirming the inclusion of Highland Karabagh province in the Azerbaijanian SSR, while the Armenians were to be mollified by the concession of local autonomy (within Azerbaijan) to Karabagh's Armenian population.[156] Although this satisfied neither the Armenians (especially as the borders of Highland Karabagh were at first poorly defined)[157] nor the Azerbaijanis, Kirov declared with bravado that, 'We have finally resolved this problem [of Karabagh], and there can be no doubt about the justice of the solution. It is absolutely certain that no fundamental reconsideration of this question will be required.'[158] In March 1924 the Moscow government had also dismissed Armenia's claim to Nakhchavan and decreed that it would be allotted to Azerbaijan as an ASSR.[159]

Armenia's position differed greatly from that of Georgia or any other nation of the USSR, because of the terrible events of preceding decades. The number of Armenians living in Georgia and Azerbaijan – 589,000 – was almost as many as those inhabiting the Armenian republic – 743,500 – while a further 230,000 lived elsewhere in the USSR. In contrast, the total number of Georgians in the Union was 1,821,200, of whom over 98% lived in the Georgian SSR, and only 32,300 (1.8%) beyond its borders. Similarly, 84% of all Soviet Azerbaijanis lived in their republic, with 137,900 in Georgia and 76,600 in Armenia, and only 3.2% elsewhere. Moreover, the Armenian SSR had the highest concentration of the titular nationality – 84% of the population of the republic – whereas Georgians formed 67% in Georgia, and Azerbaijanis 62% in Azerbaijan. This high percentage of Armenians included many refugees from Baku and Tbilisi, as well as repatriates from other countries. In addition, the Armenian diaspora amounted to some 600,000, dispersed widely in the Near East, Europe, North America and India, but maintaining links with their homeland, which since the Turkish massacres was equated with the Armenian SSR. In this respect, too, the greatest contrast was with Georgia, which had few expatriates or other links with the world outside the USSR.[160]

Armenia possessed the further dimension of an intense religious life embodied not only in the dominant Apostolic Church, but also the minority, but culturally significant, Armenian Catholic Church. As the patriarch-catholicos of the Apostolic Church was, for most Armenians, the supreme authority, both spiritual and temporal, the refusal of the incumbent, Kevork V, in 1923 to recognize the Soviet régime posed a problem. Moscow's attempt to circumvent this by the ‘Living Church’ device already applied to the Russian

Orthodox Church – the invention of an ‘Armenian Free Church’ – was ineffective, and the Bolsheviks settled for bending the Apostolic Church to their purposes. The clergy for their part accepted a stance of political subservience to the Soviet state as the condition for their church's survival, and Moscow's general strategy of keeping Echmiadzin's influence at a minimum level within the USSR while allowing the catholicos considerable scope in relations with Armenians abroad. It was Khoren Muradbekyan, ‘the most powerful clergyman in Armenia, and on excellent terms with the Soviet government’, who applied this policy as the elderly Kevork V's chief adviser, and ‘a shrewd diplomat’, putting the Armenian traditions of reticence and subtlety to good use in his hazardous dealings with the communists. In 1927 Muradbekyan persuaded Kevork V to recognize the Soviet régime and modify his Church's canons on marriage as a concession to Bolshevik legislation on divorce and other matters.[161]

The conflict between the Soviet state and the Armenian Apostolic Church carried over into the diaspora, which quickly divided into ‘Reds’ and ‘nationalists’. As the Dashnaktsutyun played a considerable part in the latter, it maintained some influence even in Soviet Armenia. Dedicated to fighting for the liberation and unification of Armenia, the Dashnaks in emigration remained a conspiratorial organization combining the roles of government-in-exile and army of liberation, and using terrorism as a weapon against their enemies. The first victims of their assassins were the Turkish pashas Talaat, Enver and others, who had organized the genocide of 1915; thereafter they attacked both nationalist Turks and Bolshevik Russians. Not all Armenian exiles agreed with the Dashnaks, however, and a body of ‘moderates’ (*ramgavar*s) emerged, who adopted a more placatory attitude to the USSR. The political conflict within the Armenian diaspora culminated in December 1933 in the murder of the Apostolic archbishop in North America, Ghevond Turyan, whom the Dashnaks believed to be a communist sympathiser.[162]

Meanwhile Bolshevik atheism won over some young people in Soviet Armenia as well. In 1928 a *Godless* magazine appeared and the Armenian Atheists' Union was created; the following year an 'anti-religious university' was founded in Yerevan. This fanaticism inspired an assault on church buildings, many of which were destroyed by the Communist Youth organization in the 1930s. Relations between the Apostolic Church and the Armenian KP became even more ambiguous when, after Kevork V's death, Muradbekyan succeeded him in 1932 as Catholicos Khoren I. Thereafter he consistently expressed appreciation of the 'peace and security' brought to Armenia by Soviet power, and the KP's 'readiness…to settle all problems with good will and on the basis of mutual understanding'[163] – even as the shadow of Terror pervaded the USSR, threatening to envelop every section of society, including Armenian Christians.

In 1917 Armenian society had been highly traditional, with domestic life subordinated to the head of the multi-generational extended family, strict rules of seniority, and the prohibition of marriage between relatives up to the seventh generation. Seclusion of married women was still practised, as were the avoidance of addressing male relatives, and the wearing of a scarf or mantle to cover the lower part of their faces when out-of-doors – all customs shared with other Caucasian peoples, whether Muslim or Christian. The Armenian SSR government reproduced legislation framed in Moscow in the 1920s, which prohibited bride-price, bride abduction and the family's collective responsibility for blood-vengeance, while making marriage and divorce matters of civil law and permitting abortion. As a result, Armenian women were released (nominally) from subordination to the male members of the family, and their emancipation was further encouraged by KP ‘women's sections’ (succeeded in 1929 by the Commission for the Improvement of Women's Way of Life) and clubs. Despite brash parading of ‘modern’ morality by some young Armenian communists, traditional mores persisted, dictating early marriage, large families, withdrawal of married women from employment, and female exclusion from involvement in political life. Nevertheless, traditional social structures were undermined by a drift to the towns, where thousands of Armenians seeking employment lived in overcrowded conditions little better than those in their semi-subterranean dwellings in the countryside.[164]

As all three Transcaucasian republics already possessed literary languages – those of Armenia and Georgia being of great antiquity (long predating that of the Russians) – the spread of literacy did not depend on the invention of new alphabets, except in so far as the Azerbaijani government led the campaign for the replacement of Arabic script with the Roman alphabet. However, this high cultural level did not apply to all: before 1917 almost 90% of Armenians were illiterate, as were 70% of Georgians,[165] although Georgia had some 1,500 schools of some kind and Russian Armenia 458. By 1926 they had more than 2,000 and 800 respectively, and the number of illiterates had fallen to 32%.

Beside their titular nationalities, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan had ethnic minorities. Russians – mainly officials and industrial workers – were a ubiquitous but numerically small element – in Armenia only 2.2% of the population (19,400) and in Georgia 3.6% (96,000). There was a considerable number of Jews (including Mountain Jews and Georgian Jews as distinct categories) in Georgia and Azerbaijan, but very few in Armenia.[166] Other smaller but significant elements in all South Caucasus republics included Kurds, of whom in 1926 there were more than 55,500, chiefly living as cattle-herders. Most Kurds were Muslims (Sunni in Armenia and Shi^{c}ah in Azerbaijan), but about one-quarter were Yazidis – a dualistic Muslim sect who believed that evil was a part of God, and that the Devil too should be placated.[167] Armenia and Georgia were also home to a people whose name 'Aturaya', in Armenian 'Aysors', associated them falsely with the Assyrians of ancient times. These 'Assyrians', speaking Aramaic, were, like the Kurds, scattered throughout mountainous regions of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and the Near East. Some had migrated into South Caucasus along with Armenians in the 1820s, and more in the 1920s, to escape persecution by the Turks because of their Nestorian Christian religion.[168] In Georgia and Armenia there were also many Greeks, who had fled from Turkey in the eighteenth century, having been invited by King Erekle II as silver and lead miners, although some became specialized as tobacco-growers.[169]

Armenia, the smallest SSR, with 881,300 inhabitants in 1926, was ethnically homogeneous, but even this small country was divided: those in eastern districts – Lori, Ijevan-Tavush, Zangezur and Karabagh – had been there since time immemorial, while those in more western districts – Aragatsotn, the Ararat basin, Gekharkunik and Vayots-dzor – which were devastated by the Persians before the 1830s, were repopulated by Armenians from eastern Turkey. Within Soviet Armenia the only other significant ethnic community

(8.7% of the population) were some 77,000 Azerbaijanis settled around Yerevan, along the north and east shores of Lake Sevan, and in many patches scattered throughout Armenia.[170]

Georgia had a more mixed population, with 33% non-Georgians, including 306,700 Armenians (12%) in Tbilisi and other towns, and perhaps 190,000 Azerbaijanis densely settled along the Georgian--Armenian border from Marneuli to the Javakheti mountains, as well as some 87,000 Osetians, and 55,900 Abkhazians in the Abkhazians ASSR.[171] The Georgians themselves were less homogeneous than the Soviet state pretended, consisting, apart from the Ḳakhs and Kartlians, of west Georgian Imeretians, Gurians, Megrelians and Svans, with their various origins and dialects or, in the case of the Megrelians and Svans, quite distinct languages.[172] Around Batumi there were also the Muslim Georgians of Acḥaria, whose social institutions were as backward as in other mountainous regions of the Caucasus, especially in respect of women's domestic servitude. From childhood upwards girls and women performed practically all the heavy tasks of cultivation, and were strictly secluded, until communist medical services and education brought a degree of emancipation.[173] All this ethnic variety, including local antagonisms, was to be toned down and officially denied for the next 60 years, but none of it vanished, and the inherent problems would reassert themselves in the 1980s.

Both the Armenian and Georgian SSRs provided schools for ethnic minorities. In 1927 Armenia had schools for Azerbaijanis, Russians, Kurds, Greeks and Assyrians; and Georgia – in addition to those for the Abkhazians, Osetians and Acḥars in their national territories – also had schools for

Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Russians, Greeks, Osetians, Germans, Jews, Assyrians, Kurds and Poles. However, all religious schools were closed in 1929, including those for Jews and Muslims, and as the latter had catered for Acḥars as well as Azerbaijanis, this caused considerable unrest.[174]

The continuing provision of ethnic minority schools raised questions of the language of instruction and the alphabets to be used – especially from 1936, when Moscow decreed that Russian must become the universal language of instruction throughout the USSR. This was enforced in ‘Transcaucasia’ too, so that even in Armenia a drift began from Armenian to the ever increasing use of Russian. The South Caucasian republics were unique in keeping the three republican languages in higher education, although practically all schools for ethnic minorities were closed. When in the 1930s pressure was applied to make all non-Russian nationalities switch from whichever alphabet was currently in use to the ‘revolutionary’ Latin alphabet, the Armenian and Georgian alphabets were threatened, but the public outcry was so great that they were retained. It was also remarkable that a few years later, when Moscow decreed that all nationalities must change over to Russian Cyrillic, Georgian and Armenian were again exempted and allowed to keep their own alphabets. Perhaps the reason was their great antiquity but, more probably, that Stalin and Beria wanted to favour – or feared to antagonize – their native region.[175] Stalin's intention of consolidating Georgia's hegemony in the Caucasus became clear in 1938, when the South Osetians, who had used the Latin alphabet since 1925, instead of changing to Cyrillic, had to adopt Georgian script, which emphasized their subjection to Tbilisi and, so far from encouraging hope of union with North Osetia, separated them even more decisively.[176] Similarly, when in 1938 it was decreed that the Abkhazians must drop the Latin alphabet which they had used since 1928, it was Georgian script that they too were forced to adopt.[177] This, and Abkhazia's immediate return to the Cyrillic alphabet after Stalin's death, when Georgia's hegemony ended, further illustrates the special status that had been accorded to Georgia during the dictator's lifetime, and on the other hand the intensity of the Abkhazians' resistance to Georgianization.[178]

Meanwhile the peasant agriculture and cottage industry which 'Transcaucasia' inherited from the Russian Empire had undergone radical modernization. The years of destruction by Turkish invasions and Russian Civil War had left more than 200,000 Armenians destitute, and only 29% of Armenia's arable land cultivated. The Armenia that, thanks to US Near East Relief, had survived still possessed too little land to support its 744,000 inhabitants, 90% of whom were rural. By the mid 1920s, agriculture had recovered, but peasants continued to flock to the towns, in many cases only to find themselves homeless and unemployed. However, in much of the Shirak plateau and the Araxes plain around Yerevan, which had been under irrigation before the war, this area was doubled during the 1930s, and the new canals also drove small turbine stations for electricity generation.[179] In Georgia too during the 1920s thousands of people moved from the land to the towns, but the number of peasant households increased by nearly 34%, and as rural population density continued to grow, the size of land-holdings decreased and land-hunger threatened. Soon after the Bolshevik conquest – which destroyed such remnants of economic institutions as the Menshevik government had succeeded in maintaining – all land was nationalized, but the KP's ostensible aim of redistributing the estates of dispossessed landowners among poor peasants, who would combine voluntarily into co-operatives, did not work. Instead, peasants to whom land was given or sold worked, as before, for their own families, so that even co-operatives previously formed for the commercial production of grapes, fruit, tea and cotton had nearly all collapsed by 1927. The Bolsheviks' partial return to capitalist practices in 1924 was accompanied in Georgia by concessions on land-leasing and the employment of hired workers, which allowed agricultural production to recover. M. I. Kalinin explained to the KP Central Committee meeting held in Tbilisi in March 1925 the need to soften their approach to the peasantry, and this was echoed by Orjonikidze, who acknowledged the regional KP's failure to enlist peasant support, admitting that in any South Caucasian village the communists could be counted on one hand, and that no such thing as a 'kulak' existed among their impoverished peasantry.[180]

In 1926 the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani governments, under orders from Moscow, drew up their five-year plan objectives, in which 'the backwardness of Transcaucasia, even in comparison with peasant Russia, was stressed repeatedly'.[181] What was of primary importance to Moscow was the region's industry – Azerbaijan's oil and Georgia's minerals. The most significant were the manganese deposits at Cḥiatura, which contributed more than 40% of world production, but the Caucasus foothills west of Tbilisi also had coal, arsenic and non-ferrous metals, with an abundance of rivers for hydroelectric generation. Armenia was the poor neighbour in respect of minerals, possessing only some copper and molybdenum ores, and little water power to exploit. It also suffered from being in an earthquake zone – and from the grudging attitude of Azerbaijan, which resented the assumption, demonstrated by Orjonikidze, that Baku oil would contribute to the prosperity not only of Azerbaijan, but of Georgia and Armenia too. In any case, Moscow's agricultural policy changed again, so that by 1928, when grain shortage in

‘Transcaucasia’ was causing riots, the Georgian government was rebuked for the ‘Menshevik’, ‘bourgeois’ moderation shown in its reluctance to apply force to the peasants. Despite the regional KP's protests that this was not a grain-producing region, Moscow's determination to include ‘Transcaucasia’ in its grain-collecting plan, and to collectivize the peasantry, was rigid, and a KP purge removed more than 7,500 of its disobedient ‘liberal’ members.[182]

During the 1920s, although Moscow's authority over the ‘Transcaucasian’ republics was no longer in doubt, their administration was confused because of their dual subordination. In general, the authority of the ‘Transcaucasian’ government over the three national republics dwindled, especially in the field of economic planning, where they were given a fairly free hand. It is difficult to distinguish between the ‘Transcaucasian’ federal government and the Georgian government, because of the Georgian communists’ dominance through their greater political experience, the dual role of Tbilisi as the seat of both these governments, and the filling of some posts in both by the same individuals. Moreover, many of those appointed to posts in non-Russian republics continued to be members of all-union bodies in Moscow.[183] At lower levels it appeared that local government was working well thanks to ‘indigenization’, although in the Caucasus (and especially in Georgia) this became linked with nationalism. In Armenia – where a new standard written language based on the eastern dialect was used in official business – the upper echelons of the KP were exclusively Armenian, as were 90% of its members, and both the KP first secretary and the head of government were always Armenians. Thus, ‘Within the limits of the Soviet framework, Armenians ran their own affairs, and in the 1920s those limits were fairly broad and flexible.’ Among the successors of T.-K. Kasyan, the original

KP secretary of the Armenian SSR, were A. Myasniḳyan, A. Hovhannisyan, H. Kostanyan and ‘the vigorous and popular Aghasi Khanjyan’, a protégé of Stalin and Kirov. The ethnic make-up of the Georgian KP was more mixed, and the proportion of Georgian members actually fell between 1922 and 1925 from 72% to 63%, most of the balance being made up of Russians and, especially after 1925, Armenians, so that by 1929 Georgian membership was only 66% and Armenian 13%. However, in the civil service and professions, as a result of indigenization many Russians and Armenians were squeezed out, and practically all top posts were occupied by Georgians. The most prominent Georgian politicians of those years, apart from Orjoniḳidze, ‘Transcaucasian’ KP secretary, 1924–6, included M. Orakhelashvili, L. Kartvelishvili and L. Ghoghoberidze.[184]

Stalin's machinations against Trotskiy and other opponents in the power struggle in Moscow were mirrored directly in Tbilisi and Yerevan during 1926–8. While Orjoniḳidze, Mikoyan and Kirov were taken into Stalin's Politburo, and Orakhelashvili took Orjoniḳidze's place as head of the ‘Transcaucasian’ KP, the ‘left opposition’ in the Georgian KP, including L. Dumbadze and M. Oḳujava, were expelled in October 1926. In Armenia a campaign against ‘counter-revolutionary’ nationalists, Dashnaḳs, Mensheviks and old Bolshevik intellectuals was launched in 1927, culminating in the arrest of 120 of Trotskiy's supporters. In autumn 1927 the unsubdued Georgian opposition published a declaration demanding new KP elections, and in Moscow when Trotskiy's policy ‘platform’ was issued in September, 26 of its 83 signatories were Georgian communists, whose support was subsequently reinforced by 200 more in Georgia itself. However, their cause evaporated as support for Trotskiy's stand against Stalin's dictatorship dwindled, and at the end of the year Ḳakhiani was installed as leader of a new

Georgian Central Committee, consisting entirely of men obedient to Stalin. A similar Armenian KP leadership was appointed in spring 1928, with H. Kostanyan as first secretary and S. Ter-Gabrielyan as chairman of the republic's Council of People's Commissars.[185]

The intrigues of the Bolshevik factions in Moscow and Tbilisi came to a head in 1928, ostensibly over opinions on whether the maximum grain production could best be extracted from the peasantry by sheer coercion into collective farms (Stalin's view, which soon became law) or by cajoling them through economic pressure – the view of most Transcaucasian Federation communists, who so far stood out against the use of force. Although there was already a shortage of flour, and signs of rebellion in the bread queues, Stalin ordered 'Transcaucasia' to provide a large quantity of grain. Before 1925 the region's communists had applied the usual ruthless system of grain confiscation, bullying village soviets and ignoring peasant opinion, as well as closing and commandeering churches, but since Kalinin's intervention they had been more lenient and had even granted amnesty to peasants arrested for their part in the 1924 insurrection. In September 1928, however, Moscow reprimanded the 'Transcaucasian' KP leaders for their moderate, 'bourgeois-nationalist' and 'Menshevik' attitude. When they failed to tighten the screw on the peasants, Stalin altered the balance of authority in the Caucasus, increasing the powers of the 'Transcaucasian' government in relation to those of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, especially in economic matters. By now collectivization was the main item on the KP agenda, and in late 1929 Moscow expelled more than 7,600 moderates from the 'Transcaucasian' KP, including its secretary, Orakhelashvili, who was replaced by a Russian, A. I. Krinitskiy.[186]

Most of the ‘Transcaucasian’ KP committee now changed sides and backed collectivization, and in November--December 1929 this calamity was unleashed upon the peasantry of South Caucasus too. In Georgia Ḳakhiani enforced Stalin's orders on the destruction of ‘kulaks’, transmitted through the ‘Transcaucasia’ KP committee, with some specifically Georgian additions, including the confiscation of the contents of farmers’ wine cellars. The communist gangs which robbed the farmers were supported by Red Army and OGPU troops, who ‘undertook lightning campaigns in selected villages, turning alleged kulaks out of their homes and distributing their goods and chattels to the poorer peasants’ – although the distinction between ‘richer’ and ‘poorer’ peasants was as tenuous here as elsewhere.[187]

The ‘Transcaucasian’ KP decided ways and means, timetables for various districts, and the best method of dealing with the victims – ranging from exile in barren regions to shooting. There have been various estimates of the numbers of ‘kulak’ families deported from ‘Transcaucasia’: at a 1929 session of the regional KP committee A. H. Karayev asked what was to be done with 40,000 ‘kulaks’ (who with their families made c. 180,000 people, or 3.4% of the region's population); an Armenian émigré stated that 25,000 people (2.9% of the population) had been deported from Armenia. In Georgia at least 207 families (910 people) were exiled from Gori district, 150 (660 people) from Kutaisi, and in Ḳakheti, where 400 families (1,800 persons) were deported as ‘kulaks’, fierce fighting broke out and 150 soldiers were killed. The mountain regions of Upper Svaneti and Khevsureti were not included in collectivization, nor was Muslim Acḥaria, where the reorganization was limited to the tea plantations.[188] The incomplete figures above give a total of 757 ‘kulak’ families (more than 3,300 people) deported from Georgia alone.

However, NKVD statistics of deported Transcaucasian peasants cast doubt on such large figures: in contrast with the number of 'kulak' families deported from Ukraine – 63,720 (c. 280,000 people, or 1.1% of the whole population), North Caucasus – 38,404 (c. 169,000 people, 7.2% of the population) or even Moscow province – 10,813 (48,000 people, 0.6% of population), the total number of families deported from 'Transcaucasia' appears to be only 870 (3,800 people, or 0.07% of the whole population).[189] This – the lowest number and percentage recorded by the NKVD for any region of the USSR – must be either the result of an accounting error, of special circumstances in 'Transcaucasia' which allowed 'the Georgian peasantry in particular…to drag its heels and keep the rate of…collectivization down below rates in other republics',[190] or of intentional misreporting to please Stalin and Beria. While theoretical discussion in the KP of the number of 'kulaks' among 'Transcaucasia's' impoverished peasantry was intense, and cost many officials their posts, disagreements between 'local nationalists' defending their own separate republics and 'centralists' who favoured the subordination of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to the regional government may have been a smokescreen within the region to disguise its avoidance of radical measures against the peasantry. The 'Transcaucasian' authorities *appeared* to follow slavishly Moscow's erratic changes of policy, with much threatening and harassment of peasants, and harsh collectivization measures evoking rebellions and the slaughter of livestock by farmers. There was also a revolt against Moscow's policies by the more humane Georgian communists, led by Beso Lominadze. This was defeated, but while the 'war' on the Georgian peasantry continued, and there was famine in some areas, local resistance and the self-interest of Stalin and his Georgian cronies may have helped to protect the peasantry to some extent.[191]

In Armenia, although the peasantry were even poorer than the ‘Transcaucasian’ average, during 1930 forces consisting of Armenian communists, industrial workers and ‘several brigades of Russian troops’ invaded the villages to force peasants into collectives and arrest, or sometimes shoot, those who refused. Both Armenians and Muslims in the republic resisted fiercely, and many took to the mountains of Lori, Zangezur, Daralagyaz and other districts, where they held out against communist attacks, sometimes by aircraft, until 1934.[192]

Significant differences in the treatment of the peasantry in the three ‘Transcaucasian’ republics are also suggested by the unequal results achieved: by the end of 1932 only 38% of farmers in ‘Transcaucasia’ were collectivized, compared with the USSR average of 62%. Even in 1937 Georgia lagged farthest behind, with only 77% collectivized, compared with Azerbaijan's reported 87%, Armenia's 88% and the USSR average of 93%.[193]

Communist Terror in the Caucasus

The Caucasus, and more particularly ‘Transcaucasia’, was deeply involved in the KP's reign of Terror because of its double connection with the supreme leader Stalin and the arch-agent of the secret police Lavrenṭi Beria. By birth a Megrelian peasant from Abkhazia, Beria was already working for the Cheka in Azerbaijan and Georgia in 1921, at the age of 22, with Mir Jafar Baghyrov as his immediate superior. In 1926 Beria became head of the OGPU in Georgia and, as the man responsible for Stalin's security while on holiday in western Georgia he came to the dictator's attention about 1929. Stalin – ignoring warnings about Beria's unpleasant personality from Orjoniḳidze and other communists – saw in

Beria a zealous spy well qualified to inform him about the situation in the Caucasus, and adept at toadying to him.[194] Another side of Beria emerged in 1930, when, like some tsarist provincial governor, he reported to Moscow that a recent concession to a peasant ‘disturbance’ in Georgia ‘was interpreted by the populace as a sign of the government's weakness…If decisive measures are not taken…we might have serious complications…[or indeed] armed uprisings.’[195] Consequently, the Moscow Central Committee removed the victimization of ‘kulaks’ from the responsibility of ‘Transcaucasian’ KP officials and put it in the hands of the OGPU. When Lominadze – now the region's KP secretary – protested against the already harsh oppression of the peasantry, Stalin perceived this as a challenge to his authority: Lominadze lost his membership of the KP Central Committee, while Beria was promoted to the Georgian Central Committee. Thereafter Stalin appointed him first secretary of the ‘Transcaucasian’ KP, at the expense of Orakhelashvili, Kartvelishvili and other senior functionaries. Beria also became chief of the ‘Transcaucasian’ OGPU, thus enjoying enormous power in the whole region – especially as the intrigues within the Georgian KP since 1921 had left many officials with records which could be used to destroy them as the Terror escalated.[196]

Apart from Beria's alacrity in fulfilling the wishes of his all-powerful patron, his promotion over the heads of seasoned communists has been attributed to the fact that, while ‘Beria had worked all his life in Transcaucasia and knew the local political environment…he was not part of the interconnected party elite that had dominated Georgia and Transcaucasia since the early 1920s’; nor was he a protégé of Orjonikidze (who loathed him). ‘Beria may have been chosen…because he was able to break through the family circles in Transcaucasia and guarantee that the Kremlin's writ would prevail in the republic.’[197] And indeed, ‘In only a few years, Stalin saw, Beria had introduced “order” in the Caucasus.’[198]

Beria's influence grew during the 1930s in parallel with the absurd cult of Stalin as a superhuman genius presiding over the burgeoning ‘happiness’ of the USSR's peoples. In Georgia this deification of the leader – one of the Georgian family – was symbolized with characteristic hyperbole. The KP leaders of each of the ‘Transcaucasian’ republics provided their capitals with ostentatious government buildings and sculptures, but those in Tbilisi surpassed them all. Its government house was a vast stone edifice of high colonnaded façades and enfilades linking balconied courtyards, the entrance flanked by massive plinths bearing heroic sculptured figures. Similarly monumental were the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and the headquarters of the Georgian Communist Party. The city had a new Stalin Embankment and, on the 2,400-foot summit of Mtatsminda (St David's Mount), a colossal statue of Stalin overlooked the city. All these were built in 1930–8, the years when the KP's absolute power over the whole Soviet Union was established by Stalin and his grand vizier Beria.[199]

The hideous effects of Beria's dictatorship in ‘Transcaucasia’ gradually became apparent during the 1930s, with the indictment on grounds of ‘nationalism’, disloyalty or sabotage of many notable figures, and masses of ordinary citizens. Stalin's attack on a Russian historian of the KP in 1932 had initiated a new historical orthodoxy, which not only made Lenin a near-deity beyond any question or criticism, but implied the same status for Stalin. ‘Orthodoxy and conformity, rather than critical analysis or faithfulness to the sources, were to mark [Soviet] historical writing for the next quarter-century’[200] – and it was Beria who provided the model for this systematic perversion and cretinization of history. In January 1934 Beria moved from his 'Transcaucasian' province to centre-stage in Moscow, on the occasion of the KP's 'Congress of victors' at which he was made a member of its Central Committee. At the end of the year the murder of Kirov was the pretext for a massive purge of the Communist Party's ranks throughout the USSR, which was especially sweeping in 'Transcaucasia': nearly 27,000 members were expelled, and more than thirty 'anti-Soviet organizations' were allegedly discovered and wiped out. The sadistic treatment which routinely accompanied the interrogation of the accused drove Lominadze to shoot himself.[201] In June 1935 Beria, the co-instigator of all this, staged a grotesque self-exhibition by spending two days reading out to a captive audience (a packed KP meeting in Tbilisi) his 330-page-long 'lecture' on 'the history of Bolshevik organizations in Transcaucasia'. This sham work, of which Beria was ostensibly the author, was a tedious series of quotations from Lenin and the Bolshevik press cobbled together into a 'historical' narrative magnifying the importance of Stalin in the emergence and triumph of communism, and implying his primacy over Lenin. It also included false denunciations of the Georgian old Bolsheviks Ienukidze and Orakhelashvili, later used as evidence leading to their execution. Beria's book, although possessing neither historical nor literary merit, was translated into many languages, including English, was reprinted many times, and became required reading for all career communists, at least in the Caucasus. Naturally, no one dared criticize it – except some Armenian communists, who were angered not only by the mendacity of Beria's account and its nauseating adulation of Stalin and Beria, but by its omission of any reference to Armenia, and in particular to S. Shahumyan. These Armenian dissidents, especially N. Stepanyan, director of the Yerevan Marxist-Leninist Institute, paid the price for their temerity by subsequent arrest, torture and execution.[202]

Armenia was not saved by the fact that ‘From the very beginning of Soviet rule…[its] Communist élite was almost entirely Armenian…the head of the party and the government were always Armenians…of proven loyalty to Moscow.’[203] Practically every politician who had held important office since 1920 was arrested on trumped-up charges and shot between 1936 and 1939, from S. Ḳasyan, the first prime minister, to A. Amatuni, who had just been appointed head of the Armenian KP in 1937.[204] Several Armenian military officers met the same fate, including corps commanders Gay and Khakhanyan, and the military expert Tairov (Ṭer-Grigoryan) who had become Soviet ambassador in Mongolia in 1935 and was awarded the Order of Lenin in January 1937. The supreme Armenian cleric, Catholicos Khoren I Muradbeḳyan, also perished in 1937 – murdered in his residence, not in prison. The Armenian middle class had already been destroyed in 1925–35, and now many of the intelligentsia were killed, including the writers A. Baḳunts and E. Charents. Further victims in Armenia were brought in by Khanjyan's exposure of a ‘Trotskiyite and nationalist group’, and Baghyrov's ‘revelation of deviation from KPSS policy’ by the Armenian secretary of the Karabagh Autonomous Province, K. Grigoryan. The total number of murdered in Armenia in 1937–8 was about 120,000 (4.1% of the republic's population), including over 3,500 KP and military leaders.[205]

In Georgia the earliest victims of the 1930s Terror were people employed in the economy: during 1931–3 groups of alleged saboteurs were ‘discovered’ in Georgia's tea plantations, the water-supply board, the ministry of agriculture and other institutions.[206] Politicians followed: the Georgian KP Congress of 1933 was used as an occasion to accuse the old Bolshevik I. Orakhelashvili of ‘Trotskiyism’, and a purge of ‘alien elements’ in the party followed. In Armenia a KP purge followed the discovery of ‘saboteurs’ among ‘bourgeois specialists’ in agriculture, and when ‘saboteurs’ were arrested in Georgia too, even the ‘Transcaucasian’ OGPU protested because it had not sanctioned the arrests – but it could do nothing when it emerged that Beria himself had ordered them. In 1934 the catalogue of Beria's victims grew with the ‘uncovering’ of a ‘Georgian National Centre’. Georgia's ruling clique consisted overwhelmingly of Georgians, many of whom were also involved in Russian metropolitan politics. Those holding high posts in Moscow were arrested and annihilated there in 1937–8, including such members of the Central Executive Committee and KP Central Committee as Avel Enukidze, Mamia Orakhelashvili, Shalva Eliava and Ilia Tṣivtṣivadze. Some had personal connections with the supreme Georgian leaders, Stalin and Orjoniḳidze, including Aleksandre Svanidze, the brother of Stalin's first wife, and Lavrenṭi Kartvelishvili (widely experienced in party work, and a friend of Orjoniḳidze – but an enemy of Beria). Orjoniḳidze himself had been Stalin's bosom friend, but this did not save him from Beria, whose machinations resulted in Orjoniḳidze's suicide in 1937 after his brother was killed by the NKVD. A large number of eminent Georgian cultural figures were also imprisoned or killed in 1937, including the historian and founder of Tbilisi university I. Javakhishvili, the classical scholar G. Tṣereteli and ten other professors, the writers M. Javakhishvili and Sh. Sharvashidze, and the poets Ṭitsian Ṭabidze (shot in prison) and P̣aolo Iashvili (who shot himself after Ṭabidze's execution). Other victims included the orchestral conductor Ye. Mikheladze, the Abkhazian dramatist S. Chanba and most of Georgia's 200 bishops.[207]

Inevitably, because of Stalin's absolute power in Moscow, and the millions of Russians who suffered during the three monstrous decades of communist Terror, the Georgian people in general were often blamed by association and assumed by many Russians to have been spared the horrors of concentration camps, torture and execution. A Georgian history refutes this convincingly:

> The North Caucasus and Georgian Party leader at this time was L. Beria, and it was he, above all, who to prove his devotion disposed of all Stalin's potential rivals, and then organized a veritable genocide of the Georgians. According to official figures, the number of people condemned to GULAG camps included 830,000 Russians, 181,405 Ukrainians, 44,485 Belorussians, 24,499 Uzbeks, 19,758 Jews, 11,723 Georgians, 11,064 Armenians, 4,347 Tajiks, etc. If the figures recorded for these peoples, plus those executed in regional prisons, are compared with their total population numbers, it becomes clear that in terms of the relative numbers of victims Georgia was among the republics which were hardest hit.[208]

Another of Stalin's cronies in the Caucasus was Nestor Lakoba, the Abkhazian Bolshevik and first chairman of the Abkhazian Republic from 1922 until 1936; his death in that year was officially attributed to a heart attack, but he was probably poisoned on Beria's orders. After his death Lakoba was calumnied as a ‘Trotskiyite’ conspiring to kill Stalin, and the monstrous slander culminated in the torture and killing of Lakoba's wife and the shooting of his young son. More than forty other Abkhazian KP leaders were accused of the non-existent conspiracy, ten of whom were shot, as were many people in the usual categories, such as ‘saboteurs’ of the republic's agriculture. Nor did Acharia escape the Terror: in 1937 on the basis of false accusations its head of government, Z. Lordkipanidze, and ten colleagues were murdered with Stalin's approval. Altogether, it has been estimated that as many as 130,000 people of all categories (3.7% of the population) became victims of the reign of terror in Georgia in 1937–8, of whom KP leaders accounted for about 4,200.[209]

In Azerbaijan, the same man, Mir Jafar Baghyrov, had headed the government ever since 1921, when, like his crony Beria, he had first joined the secret police. Baghyrov had combined continuous headship of the Azerbaijan OGPU/NKVD with chairmanship of the republic's government (1921–33) and first secretaryship of its KP (1933–53), as well as being a member of the KP Central Committee in Moscow (1934–53). Even in the Caucasus this long-term monopoly of such a combination of elevated posts was unusual, and no doubt explains much about the direction taken by Azerbaijanian politics right up to the 1980s – and thereafter. Baghyrov's personal abuse of power was notorious, but he flourished until the death of Stalin, when he was expelled from the KP and shot in 1956.

Ruthless annihilation of any opposition to KP power in Azerbaijan had begun in 1921 with the destruction of the former ‘bourgeois’ government and the Islamic-nationalist resistance in Ganja. The second half of the 1920, brought the campaign against Turkic national communism, or Sultangaliyevism’, and former members of the Müsawat party; and 1934 the launching of the USSR-wide assault on old Bolsheviks, ‘saboteurs’, etc. Among the communist members of the first governments of the Azerbaijan SSR to be murdered in 1937–8 were Dadash Buniyatzadä, Ali

Heydar Karayev and Hamid Sultanov. A number of their colleagues holding office in Moscow were also victims, including T. Aliyev and M. Huseynov (former key figures for imposing Soviet rule in Turkestan), Gadhanfar Musabekov, A. Shakhmuradov, S. Efendiyev, and the translator of Marx, Engels and Lenin into Azerbaijani, Ruhullah Akhundov. Several notable Azerbaijani commanders perished in the Red Army purge, including G. Vezirov, D. Aliyev and M. Talibzadä. Among numerous writers victimized were Yu. Chämänzaminli, S. Hüseyn, J. Jabarly, Ahmad Javad, Huseyn Javid and M. Müsfiq. The total loss to Azerbaijan of educated, capable people in 1937–8 probably amounted to some 120,000 'class enemies' (which, calculated on the same basis as the figures given above for Georgia, would be 5.6% of the total Azerbaijani population).[210]p>KP Terror followed the same pattern in North Caucasus. In Daghestan nearly all members of the republic's first government and communist leadership, including M. Atayev, M. Dalgat, J. Korkmasov, K. Mamedbekov, A. Takho-Godi and the KP first secretary N. Efendiyev-Samurskiy, were killed in 1937–8. Most of them were accused of 'bourgeois nationalism' and pan-Turkism, 'evidence' for which was found in their supporting the adoption of the 'Turkish' (Türk) language – in fact Azerbaijani – as the official language in Daghestan, and their protest to Moscow against the republic's subordination to Russia's South-East Territory in 1924. Other victims included the director of the Daghestan National Culture Institute, Mahmudov, along with seven colleagues; and numerous writers, including B. Astemirov, H. Hajjibekov, E. Kapiyev and R. Nurov. Many other ordinary Daghestani people underwent the same indignities and cruelty as in other parts of the USSR.[211] One KP official recalled how his uncle Mahomed, a Kumuk imam forced to become a labourer when his village mosque was closed, was exiled to Kazakstan with his wife and family in 1935. At that time, 'when people's fate was decided by informal political meetings of KP activists', a group of young communists entrusted with organizing local adults for hay-cutting arbitrarily decided that: 'Mahomed Umalatov – he knows Arabic, used to work in a mosque, his father was a great scholar – he's here in Makhachkala instead of working in a kolkhoz; so he's obviously anti-Soviet! People like him should get deported far away.' So, with no investigation whatever, a man who had never uttered a word against the Soviets or collectivization spent twenty-two years in exile in Kazakstan, and buried his wife and daughter there. Half a century later a Kumuk wrote that during the Terror nearly all Kumuks possessing honour, dignity and culture were condemned to be shot, exiled or 'destroyed spiritually' at the hands of compatriots who possessed authority in Daghestan and collaborated with the NKVD.[212]

In Chechen-Ingushia too, the Terror began long before 1937: 'From 1922 to 1943, the history of Chechnia and Daghestan was an almost uninterrupted succession of rebellions, counter-expeditions and "political banditism".'[213] Particularly large uprisings, incurring harsh KP military retaliation, occurred in 1926–30 in Ingushia because of Russian interference in political and religious life, and in 1929–30 in connection with collectivization. A dramatic confrontation between Ingush leaders and OGPU agents occurred in 1926–30 after the dismissal of the province's KP secretary, Idris Zyazikov, as a 'national communist', because he had functioned 'without classes and class struggle, without arrests and trials, in complete harmony with the local sheykhs, *murid*s and mullahs'.[214] His replacement from Russia, Chernoglaz, immediately initiated an anti-Muslim campaign, during which a local OGPU chief who had attempted to commandeer a mosque as a grain store was killed by a Kunta Hajji devotee. In reprisal five Ingush were shot and thirty exiled to Siberia. Thereafter, in order to incriminate more people the OGPU invented a fantastic charade (subsequently widely used) in which a 'Japanese spy' (actually a Mongol) appeared in Ingushia, with rumours of impending war and an anti-Russian uprising. On the pretext of this 'Ingush conspiracy', Chernoglaz had many villagers arrested, 21 shot and 400 exiled to Siberia. Chernoglaz went too far, however, in ordering the arrest of all known Kunta Hajji adherents: he was ambushed in his car, shot and beheaded.[215]

Because of such actions by the Russians, 'Peasant revolts in the mountains of Chechnia occurred every spring as though carefully pre-planned…guerrilla warfare…was a permanent phenomenon.' Chechen-Ingush protests against collectivization as an attack on autonomy and Islamic institutions were met by Moscow and Vladikavkaz headquarters with their customary deceit and violence. When the Chechens responded by killing 150 OGPU soldiers in Shali and declaring *ghazawat*, the communists deployed formidable forces to crush them. Thus in Chechen-Ingushia, where the peasants were less submissive than in Russia and Ukraine, the anti-'kulak' campaign became a large-scale military operation, in which about 35,000 men were arrested, and many executed.[216]

The Chechens and Ingush were subjected to further terrorist operations after collectivization. In 1932 they were targeted in a maliciously contrived 'investigation' leading to the arrest of 3,000 professional people as members of a non-existent 'Chechen-Ingush national centre' with foreign connections, which was supposedly planning a counter-revolutionary uprising throughout the Caucasus. This was not the first time the Chechen and Ingush intelligentsia had been victimized, since some had fallen foul of the Bolsheviks after the Civil War, causing a number of prominent politicians to join the North Caucasus émigrés in Turkey and central Europe. With the aim of furthering the careers of NKVD officers, punitive operations on a smaller scale were frequently mounted against unsubmissive individuals and ‘anti-Soviet gangs’, such as Ibrahim of Geldegen, who was killed in 1934. The second round of mass arrests took place from July 1937 to November 1938, when practically all Chechens and Ingush who had ever held professional posts before October 1917 – not wild tribesmen, but former civil servants, businessmen, lawyers, scientists, petroleum specialists, army officers, etc., including members of the first Chechen and Ingush governments, and practically all members of the republic's current central and local administration (loyal KP and Soviet officials) – were thrown into NKVD cells for interrogation. A long-drawn-out ‘case’, involving 137 supposed members of a ‘bourgeois-nationalist centre of Chechen-Ingushia’, was concocted, and ‘proof’ of their complicity in a supposed counter-revolutionary plot financed by the British and other Western governments with the ludicrous aim of restoring a ‘North Caucasus federal republic under the protection of Turkey and England’ was laboriously fabricated from ‘confessions’ and mutual incriminations extracted by beating and torture. When the proceedings came to an end in 1941 at least six of the ‘leaders’ were executed, many others received long sentences in concentration camps, and a few were reprieved. The total number of Terror victims in Chechen-Ingushia in the late 1930s has been estimated at about 14,000.[217] As elsewhere, the thousands of innocent victims of communist Terror included the first generation of Chechen writers, such as Said Baduyev, Shamsuddin Aiskhanov, Ahmad Nazhayev and Aladi Dudayev. These and thousands of other ordinary, law-abiding citizens were shot in Groznyy's NKVD headquarters or in the hills outside the town, and buried in mass graves.[218]

Far from breaking the spirit of the Chechens and Ingush, these atrocities demanded vengeance, and thousands left home to join the anti-Russian partisans in the forests and mountains. NKVD officers were assassinated and trains wrecked, especially in operations in 1940 led by Hasan Israilov, who derived inspiration for the unequal fight from the heroic stand taken by Finland against Russian invasion at this time.[219] In view of these events it is not surprising that the Chechens harboured a profound hatred for their Soviet Russian oppressors as the Second World War approached.

Although the KP's political police and judiciary invented a threat of mass insurrection by all the non-Russian peoples of North Caucasus, in fact active opposition to their rule was restricted mainly to Ingushia, Chechenia and Daghestan, while the peoples to the west of Vladikavkaz remained fairly passive. In Kabarda-Balkaria, for instance, there was a celebration in 1936 to mark fifteen years of the AP's existence and its new status as an ASSR, and Kalinin and the Moscow government singled it out for special praise as one of the USSR's leading provinces, supposedly demonstrating the success of the party's nationalities policy. Nevertheless, in July 1937 Ye. G. Yevdokimov assembled the North Caucasus Territory's leadership for briefing about a widespread purge, in which the Osetian, Kabardan, Balkar, Karachay and Cherkes communist leaders shared the fate of those in the east. For instance, Betal Kalmykov – a Bolshevik Civil War commander, chairman of the North Caucasus Executive Committee in 1920, later secretary of the Kabarda-Balkar KP committee, and a member of the USSR Central Executive Committee in Moscow – was executed in 1940 for the usual fabricated ‘crimes’.[220] As KP leaders were not victimized in isolation, it is assumed that Kalmykov's colleagues, as well as members of the Kabarda national intelligentsia and other citizens were also killed or imprisoned. As we have seen, one official *History of Kabarda* does not mention the Terror at all,[221] but another expresses the induced mood of that time, implying ubiquitous sabotage at construction sites, collective farms, factories and schools and in the ranks of the KP by ‘Trotskiyite and Bukharinist agents of fascism and bourgeois-nationalist traitors to the motherland’ – ‘enemies of the people’, without whom the territory's achievements would have been even greater. The author, or a KPSS editor, adds his voice to the strident chorus of demands for ‘merciless annihilation of the enemies of the party and people – Japanese--German, Trotskiyite--Bukharinist spies, bourgeois-nationalists, saboteurs and murderers’.[222]

The small Balkar nation was not neglected: victims included the Bolsheviks Mahomed and Nazir Katkanov, who had fought to establish the Soviet régime in Balkaria, Chechenia and Daghestan, the writer Basiat Shakhanov, Kirov's colleague in organizing the United Congress of Mountain Peoples, and other writers and teachers killed as ‘SR nationalists’, ‘Shariatists’, etc.[223]

Along with the Russians, from peasants to administrators, who provided victims for the Communist Party's secret police, the largest ethnic group in North Caucasus were the Cossacks of the Terek and Kuban. They had ceased to exist as a military caste in 1920, but despite harsh persecution had not all been ‘liquidated’; in fact a large proportion of farmers were of Cossack origin, and their villages were still *stanitsa*s. For the rural inhabitants of the USSR in general, collectivization was essentially a form of Terror, and the Cossacks in particular were an obvious target because of their past history and strong traditions, and the vindictiveness which Stalin's ruling clique applied to all who stood out from the ordinary cowed masses. On the Kuban the indigenous population (outnumbered four to one by Russians and Ukrainians in the Adygey AP, and 110:1 in the whole Kuban or Azov--Black Sea region) consisted of some 51,000 Adygeys and a smaller number of other Circassians. Of these, about 760 are said to have been victims of repression in 1937–40, including some 200 shot. The total number of victims in the Kuban region was more than 40,000, including 10,800 shot, most of whom would have been Russians and Ukrainians of Cossack origin. However, this region too had absorbed other groups of immigrants of various ethnic origins, who also became Terror victims. Greeks, who had settled in the region as tobacco-growers, provided 1,137 victims, some of whom were shot; a community of German colonists in Yeysk district ran the model collective farm ‘Neuweg’ (New Way), thirty of whose members were executed in 1938, and the total number of ‘Russian’ Germans arrested was 905. Of the Estonians living in Kuban territory, thirty-five were arrested and shot in 1938 as ‘saboteurs’; Krasnodar's glass industry was run mainly by Poles, who were accused of planning terrorist attacks on Stalin and Voroshilov as they holidayed in Abkhazia. For each of these ethnic communities a non-existent counter-revolutionary organization was cited, e.g. the ‘Polish Military Organization’ and the ‘German-Fascist Nationalist Insurrectionist Organization’ and their alleged members were cruelly ‘punished’.[224] The victimization of these small communities demonstrates how ubiquitous and mechanically thorough the atrocities of the Communist Party's organs of repression were. While the largest groups of their victims were Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians and other populous nationalities, no ethnic group or district was too small or too innocent to attract their attention, as grist to the mill of Terror, practised in the name of justice by the communist leadership of ‘the great Russian people’ and ‘first socialist state in the history of mankind’.

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[1] Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, pp. 92–3, 391–2; G. Simon, *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: from Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*, translated by K. Forster and O. Forster, Oxford, 1991, pp. 5, 9, 13, 24–33, 36–54.

[2] Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, pp. 87–8, 92–3; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 23–4.

[3] R. E. G. Davies, *Aeroflot: an Airline and Its Aircraft*, Shrewsbury, 1992, maps on pp. 16, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 34, 44, 56.

[4] In Russian there are two adjectives denoting ‘Russian’: *russkiy* means ethnically or culturally Russian, of people, arts and artefacts; *rossiyskiy* means ‘pertaining to the Russian state or the country called *Rossiya*’, of official bodies or documents, e.g. ‘the Rossiyan Federation’, which includes Siberia but not Ukraine or Georgia.

[5] C. H. Fairbanks, ‘Clientelism and higher politics in Georgia, 1949–1953’, in Suny, ed., *Transcaucasia*, pp. 339–41.

[6] Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 311, 313–16; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 170.

[7] Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 147, 148–9, 162; A. Znamenskiy, ‘Donskaya alternativa: perechityvaya M. A. Sholokhova’, in Merkulov, ed., *Rus mnogolikaya*, pp. 206–9. In both of these works the blame for the increasing Cossack opposition is put on Trotskiy, who is supposed to have ignored directives from Lenin urging more sensitive treatment of the Cossacks.

[8] M. Heller and A. Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti: istoriya Sovetskogo Soyuza s 1917 do nashikh dney*, 2 vols., London, 1982, vol. I, p. 105; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 148, 150, 157–8, 161–4; Znamenskiy, ‘Donskaya alternativa’, pp. 207–13.

[9] ‘Circular letter of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee's Organizational Bureau to all executive workers in the Cossack Hosts, 24 January 1919’, quoted from M. Bernshtam, ‘Storony v grazhdanskoy voyne 1917–1922 gg.’, *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniya*, 1979, no. 128, p. 301, cited by Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti*, vol. I, pp. 90–1, 344–5 n. 121. The same source estimates that about 1.5 million Cossack people were killed, perhaps 70% of the whole Don Host.

[10] Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti*, vol. I, pp. 90–1, 249–50; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 170–2. Behind this indictment of Trotskiy lies the Russian anti-Semites’ fantasy of the ‘Judaeo-Masonic plot’ – in this case supposedly aiming to undermine the revolution and prolong the Civil War in order to destroy the Russian and Ukrainian peoples, as well as to destroy the traditional family. – Cf. Znamenskiy, ‘Donskaya alternativa’, pp. 203–5, 207.

[11] V. Levchenko, 'Chernye doski', in Merkulov, ed., *Rus mnogolikaya*, p. 228; Znamenskiy, 'Donskaya alternativa', pp. 206, 209–10.

[12] Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 275; Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, pp. 50–1; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, p. 176; Znamenskiy, 'Donskaya alternativa', pp. 195, 209.

[13] Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 150, 171, 177–8, 189–92.

[14] M. S. Bogdanov, *Razgrom zapadnosibirskogo kulatsko-eserovskogo myatezha 1921 g.*, Tyumen, 1961; Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 277; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 318–20; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 173–6.

[15] Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 322; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VIII, pp. 574–5; Levchenko, 'Chernye doski', p. 229.

[16] B. A. Abramov, 'Kollektivizatsiya selskogo khozyaystva v RSFSR', in V. P. Danilov, compiler, *Ocherki istorii kollektivizatsii selskogo khozyaystva v soyuznykh respublikakh: sbornik statey*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 103–4; I. I. Alekseyenko, *Repressii na Kubani i Severnom Kavkaze v 30-e gg. XX veka*, Krasnodar, 1993, pp. 9, 12–13, 21; R. W. Davies, *The Socialist Offensive: The Collectivisation of Soviet Agriculture 1929–1930*, London, 1980, pp. 258–9; Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 325; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VIII, pp. 550, 566, 571; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 96; A. I. Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, 3 vols., London, 1974–8, vol. III, pp. 353, 356–7, 360, 363.

[17] Alekseyenko, *Repressii na Kubani*, p. 27; Levchenko, 'Chernye doski', pp. 224–6, 228–9.

[18] Alekseyenko, *Repressii na Kubani*, p. 50; Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, pp. 275–81; Yu. A. Polyakov, V. B. Zhiromskaya and I. N. Kiselev, 'Polveka molchaniya (Vsesoyuznaya perepis naseleniya 1937g.)', *Sotsiologicheskiye issledovaniya*, 1990, nos. 6–8, [p. 1], pp. 11, 16–17 [hereafter Census 1937]. Comparison of the 1937 and 1926 Censuses shows that, in contrast with more northerly regions west of the Urals, Ukraine and adjacent Russian provinces, North Caucasus (excluding non-Russian territories) and provinces west of the lower Volga suffered population reductions between 2.1% and 23%. For Census 1926, see F. Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects*, Geneva, 1946.

[19] Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, pp. 278–9; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 328–30.

[20] E. Mawdsley and M. Mawdsley, *Moscow and Leningrad (Blue Guide)*, London, 1980, pp. 321–2.

[21] D. Arbakov, '*The Kalmyks*', Munich, 1958, pp. 30–6; B. B. Batuyev, ed., *Natsionalnoye dvizheniye v Buryatii v 1917–1919 gg.: dokumenty i materialy*, Ulan-Ude, 1994, pp. 9–10, 12–13, 26–9, 54, 75, 197; I. Borisenko, 'Skolko bylo khurulov?', *Izvestiya Kalmykii*, 15 March 1994 Dimanshteyn, *Revolutsiya i natsionalnyy vopros*, vol. III, pp. 379–81, 432–3; Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, pp. 273, 277, 279, 280–1; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 292–3; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, pp. 744, 753.

[22] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', p. 30; J. Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken 1942 bis 1945*, Freiburg, 1974, pp. 33–4; A. M. Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: the Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War*,

translated from Russian by G. Saunders, New York, 1978, pp. 66–7; Volkogonov, *Lenin*, pp. 7, 8.

[23] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', pp. 31–2; *Atlas SSSR*, Moscow 1928, pp. 47–8; Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, p. 278; Census 1937, [pt. 2], p. 58; Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, pp. 61–2, 161.

[24] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', p. 30; T. T. Hammond, 'The communist takeover of Outer Mongolia: model for Eastern Europe?', in *Studies on the Soviet Union* (ns), 11, 4, *The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers*, Munich, 1971, pp. 110–29; *Istoriya Mongolskoy Narodnoy Respubliki*, pp. 344–5, 405; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, pp. 128–37; Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, p. 243; R. A. Rupen, 'The absorption of Tuva', in *Studies on the Soviet Union* (ns), 11, 4, 1971, pp. 145–62; R. A. Rupen, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled: a Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic, 1900–1978*, Stanford, 1979, pp. 5–33, 36–44.

[25] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', p. 30; Borisenko, 'Skolko bylo khurulov?'; I. Borisenko, 'Svyatogo sudili bezbozhniki', *Izvestiya Kalmykii*, February 1994, p. 2; Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 35–6; W. Kolarz, *The Peoples of the Soviet Far East*, London, 1954, p. 115n.; Kolarz, *Religion*, p. 467; Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, p. 293.

[26] *Revolyutsionnyy Vostok*, 1931, no. 11/12, p. 238, cited in Kolarz, *Peoples*, p. 115n.

[27] C. R. Bawden, 'Some aspects of the development of the vocabulary of the Mongolian language in the twentieth century' (paper presented at the Second European Seminar

on Central Asian Studies, convened in the University of London (SOAS), April 1987), p. 2; *Istoriya Mongolskoy Narodnoy Respubliki*, pp. 405–6, 493–4; P. T. Khaptayev *et al.*, eds., *Istoriya Buryatskoy ASSR*, 2 vols., Ulan-Üde, 1959, vol. II, pp. 347, 350–2, 370, 373–4, 582; M. P. Makareyev and Ch. Tumendelger, eds., *Mongoliya: 100 voprosov i otvetov*, Moscow, 1989, pp. 159–60; Rupen, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled*, pp. 49–50.

[28] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', p. 34; Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, pp. 293–5; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 765.

[29] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', p. 32; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 84; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, pp. 748–9; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, p. 66; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy* ASSR, [vol. II], *Epokha sotsializma*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 152–3; Rupen, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled*, pp. 53–6.

[30] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 107.

[31] *Istoriya Kazakhstana*, pp. 307–11; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, pp. 264–6; G. Lias, *Kazak Exodus*, London, 1956; M. B. Olcott, 'The collectivization drive in Kazakhstan', *Russian Review*, 1981, 40, pp. 122–42.

[32] By 1939 this had fallen to 1.1%: Kalmytskiy Nauchno-issledovatelskiy Institut Istorii, Filologii i Ekonomiki, *Problemy sovremmenykh etnicheskikh protsessov v Kalmykii*, edited by A. G. Mitirov, *et al.*, Elista, 1985, p. 28.

[33] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', pp. 32–3; Dzhimbinov, *Sovetskaya Kalmykia*, pp. 60–1; Kalesnik, *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, p. 319; Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, p. 278; *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], p. 212. Altogether 30,933 families, or nearly 155,000 people, were deported to 'kulak exile' in 1930–1 from the Lower Volga province, including Kalmykia: V. N. Zemskov, 'Spetsposelentsy (po dokumentam NKVD–MVD SSSR)', *Sotsiologicheskiye issledovaniya*, 1990, no. 11, p. 4.

[34] Kuzeyev, ed., *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, pp. 273, 292, 294–5; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 765; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, p. 67.

[35] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', p. 34; Borisenko, 'Skolko bylo khurulov?'; Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 37 and n. 78, 38–9; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 85; Kuzeyev, *Narody Povolzhya i Priuralya*, p. 293; *Narody yevropeyskoy chasti*, vol. II, p. 767; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, p. 67; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 50.

[36] In recent Azerbaijanian dictionaries the word for Azerbaijani(s) is *Azärbayjanly* (in the new Turkish spelling Azərbaycanlı).

[37] Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, pp. 52–3, 86–7, 181, 183, 194.

[38] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 119–20, 123–4, 132, 134.

[39] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 131–3.

[40] *Ibid*., pp. 122–3; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, p. 136; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 30, 32, 36–7.

[41] The Arabic alphabet is inadequate for most other languages because Arabic has twenty-six consonants, but only three (long) vowels have letters representing them. Persian, also written and printed in the Arabic alphabet, has seventeen consonants, which are overrepresented by twenty-seven Arabic letters, and seven vowels, of which, as in Arabic, only the three long ones are written. In contrast, English (southern British) with twenty-six letters, represents about twenty-one consonants and a dozen vowels, while modern Turkish (close to Azerbaijani) has eighteen consonants and eight vowels, each clearly distinguished in its modified Latin alphabet.

[42] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 124; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 118–19; S. Crisp, 'Soviet language planning 1917–1953', in M. Kirkwood, ed., *Language Planning in the Soviet Union*, London, 1989, pp. 26–8; I. I. Groshev, ed., *Bratskoye sodruzhestvo narodov SSSR 1922–1936: sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow, 1964, p. 335; Hostler, *Turkism and the Soviets*, p. 154; Hotham, *The Turks*, p. 93; M. I. Isayev, *National Languages in the USSR: Problems and Solutions*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 238, 241, 249; M. I. Isayev and L. M. Zak, 'Problemy pismennosti narodov SSSR v kulturnoy revolyutsii', *Voprosy istorii*, 1966, pt. 2, pp. 6, 8; I. Khansuvarov, *Latinizatsiya – orudiye Leninskoy natsionalnoy politiki*, Moscow, 1932, pp. 11–12; Sultangaliyev, *Statyi*, pp. 8, 178–218; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 190.

[43] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 124; Davletshin, *Sovetskiy Tatarstan*, pp. 157n., 304, 306, 308; Groshev, *Bratskoye sodruzhestvo*, pp. 383–5; Isayev, *National Languages*, pp. 244–5, 249–50, 269; Isayev and Zak, 'Problemy pismennosti', pp. 9, 14–18; Khansuvarov, *Latinizatsiya*, pp. 13, 23; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, p. 151; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 44–5, 153–4; S. Tekiner, 'Azerbaijan', in *Studies on the Soviet Union (New Series)*, Munich, 1971, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 60.

[44] Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia*, pp. 156, 413, 419–21; *Islam: slovar ateista*, Moscow, 1988, pp. 50, 52, 74–5; F. G. Kocharly and M. M. Sattarov, 'Razvitiye ateizma v Sovetskom Azerbaydzhane', in *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 50, 52; C. Lemercier- Quelquejay, 'Islam and identity in Azerbaijan', *Central Asian Survey*, 1984, 3, 2, pp. 37–8.

[45] Glassé, *Concise Encyclopædia of Islam*, p. 397; *Islam: slovar ateista*, p. 205; Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 416–20; Lemercier-Quelquejay, 'Islam and identity', p. 39.

[46] H. A. Aliyev, 'Iz istorii kollektivizatsii selskogo khozyaystva Azerbaydzhana', in Danilov, comp., *Ocherki*, pp. 317, 321–2, 325; Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 140; Suny, *Making*, pp. 247, 256; Tekiner, 'Azerbaijan', p. 57.

[47] *Census*, 1937, [part 1], p. 18. According to the falsified 1939 Census, Azerbaijan's population then was 3,205,000: Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 384.

[48] Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 162, 164; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. I, *Indoyevropeyskiye yazyki*, pp. 281–322.

[49] By 1937 the three largest indigenous non-Azerbaijani peoples of Azerbaijan had increased considerably in numbers: Talysh – 99,200; Lezgis – c. 76,000; Tats – 57,000: Census 1937, [pt. 2], p. 58.

[50] G. Chaliand, ed., *People without a Country: the Kurds and Kurdistan*, London, 1980, pp. 221, 224–5; Groshev, *Bratskoye sodruzhestvo*, pp. 361–2, 364; Ye. Pchelina, ‘Po Kurdistanskomu uyezdu Azerbaidzhana (putevye zametki)’, *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1932, no. 4, pp. 108–21.

[51] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 228–9. It is possible that Moscow's collusion with Azerbaijan in ignoring the Lezgis’ request for an ethnic territory may be partly explained by Stalin's Georgian origin and his favour towards Baghyrov: all Daghestanis were referred to in Georgian as Lezgis (*Leḳiebi*), and raiding in Georgia by Daghestani hillmen was *leḳianoba* ‘Lezgi business’. See G. D. Togoshvili, ‘Voprosy istorii narodov Severnogo Kavkaza i ikh vzaimootnosheniy s Gruziyey v Gruzinskoy sovetskoy istoriografii’, in Togoshvili, *Gruzino-Severokavkazskiye vzaimootnosheniya*, pp. 33–4, 39–40. Some nineteenth-century Russian maps followed this usage by labelling the whole of Daghestan except Kumykia as ‘Lezginy’, e.g. two nineteenth-century maps of the Caucasus reproduced in *Istoriya Kabardy*.

[52] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, p. 130.

[53] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 356, 373.

[54] *Ibid*., p. 605; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, p. 130.

[55] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 328; B. N. Berezgov, ‘Sovremennoye polozheniye severokavkazskikh mukhadzhirov v stranakh mira’, in Gugov, ed., *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnaya borba*, pp. 72–3, 80–1; Rizvanov and Rizvanov, *Istoriya lezgin*, p. 30.

[56] Census 1937, [pts 1 and 2].

[57] Concerning the Talysh, Soviet reference books differ: *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, 1962, map opp. p. 16, misleadingly describes them as ‘an ethnographic group of the Azerbaijani people’, but at least, like *Atlas narodov mira*, 1964, p. 19, indicates the existence of Talysh and other non-Azerbaijani nationalities. An atlas of Azerbaijan (*Azärbaijan SSR Atlasy*, Moscow, 1979), ignores ethnic minorities in the republic. Even *Atlas SSSR*, 1983, p. 128, which indicates Lezgis and Udins within Azerbaijan, gives no indication of the existence of the Talysh. An account of a British diplomat's unofficial visit to Lankaran in 1937, when local people, presumably Talysh, were being deported, occurs in F. Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, London, 1949, pp. 35–45.

[58] Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 75.

[59] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 288; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XIII, p. 813; Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. IV, pp. 412–20; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 104–7, 113; Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 186–7.

[60] Bennigsen, ‘Muslim guerrilla warfare’; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 121–2; G. D. Daniyalov, *Stroitelstvo sotsializma v Dagestane, 1918–1937*, Moscow, 1988, p. 98.

[61] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 280–2; N. F. Bugay, 'Predstavitelstva – konstitutivnye organy mezhnatsionalnykh svyazey. 20-e gody', in N. F. Bugay and D. Kh. Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz: natsionalnye otnosheniya (istoriografiya, problemy)*, Maykop, 1992, pp. 91–101, 121–3, 132 n. 135, 133, 136; N. F. Bugay, M. M. Kudyukina and T. P. Khlynina, 'Natsionalnye problemy istoriografii rossiyskikh avtonomiy 1988–1990 gg.', *Ibid*., pp. 18–19; Daniyalov, *Stroitelstvo sotsializma v Dagestane*, p. 102.

[62] Bugay, 'Predstavitelstva', pp. 123, 141; E. H. Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia: Socialism in One Country 1924–1926*, vol. II, London, 1959, pp. 282–3, 285–6; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 21.

[63] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 280, 284–5; Bugay, 'Predstavitelstva', pp. 123–6; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1988–9, vol. 7, no. 5–6, p. 10; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, p. 213.

[64] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 303–19.

[65] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 26–7; Bugay, 'Predstavitelstva', p. 118; D. Kh. Mekulov, 'Natsionalno-gosudarstvennoye i sovetskoye stroitelstvo v Adygeye: nachalnyy etap, tendentsii', in Bugay and Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 70–1, 73–4, 87; Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 136–7.

[66] E. g. Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 136–40.

[67] Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 183. Another writer attributes the division of the Mountain ASSR to Moscow's anti-Islamic strategy, with particular reference to Turkey and its prevailing pan-Turkism: S. Blank, ‘The formation of the Soviet North Caucasus 1918–1924’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1993, 12, 1, pp. 27–8.

[68] Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 117.

[69] Review of S. F. Gubarev, *Iz istorii stroitelstva Sovetskoy shkoly v natsionalnykh respublikakh Severnogo Kavkaza*, Rostov-on-Don, 1982, in *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1983, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 2–3; Totoyev, *Ocherki*, *et al.*, eds., vol. II, pp. 117–18.

[70] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 5–6, 71–2.

[71] Aliroyev, *Yazyk*, pp. 90–1; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 172, 174, 177; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, p. 130; Broxup, ‘Last *ghazawat*’, p. 120.

[72] These were the languages of the Avars, Dargans, Laks, Lezgis, Tabasarans and Chechens (of whom Daghestan had a considerable minority); the Iranian Tat language; the two indigenous Turkic languages, Kumuk and Nogay, in addition to Azerbaijani and, as the lingua franca – Russian: Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, p. 130; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 137–8; M. A. Gökburi, ‘Yazyk i kultura’, *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 1, pp. 13–15.

[73] Aliroyev, *Yazyk, istoriya i kultura*, p. 91; Baytugan, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 30; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 174; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 119, 122.

[74] Totoyev, *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 118–19.

[75] N. Samurskiy, *Dagestan*, Moscow, 1925, pp. 131–2, quoted in Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. 7.

[76] Aliroyev, *Yazyk, istoriya i kultura*, p. 91; *Izvestiya Severo-Kavkazskogo Nauchnogo Tsentra Vysshey Shkoly*, 1982, no. 1, quoted in *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1983, vol. 2, no. 4, p. 3; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 187; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 145.

[77] Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and Ingush', pp. 156, 165–6.

[78] Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 90–1.

[79] Bugay and Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 103–4, 113–14, 133; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 92, 114–15.

[80] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 98–103; Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. 6; Daniyalov, *Stroitelstvo sotsializma v Dagestane*, pp. 83–8, 183–7; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 115–16.

[81] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 144–5, 149–52; Bryan, 'Internationalism', p. 201.

[82] Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. 6.

[83] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 187–8; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, pp. 49, 50; Bryan,

‘Internationalism’, p. 201.

[84] Daniyalov, *Stroitelstvo sotsializma v Dagestane*, pp. 187–9.

[85] A. I. Hasanova, *Raskreposhcheniye zhenshchiny-goryanki v Dagestane (1920–1940 gg.)*, Makhachkala, 1963, pp. 111–13, 122–3, 133–8; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 158–60.

[86] M. V. Vagabov, *Islam i semya*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 138–44.

[87] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 161–2; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 189; Daniyalov, *Stroitelstvo sotsializma v Dagestane*, p. 91; Hasanova, *Raskreposhcheniye*, pp. 54–8, 114; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 119.

[88] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, p. 166; Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 265–6; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 174.

[89] In an orthodox KPSS history of Chechenia--Ingushia the author attempts to denigrate the resistance to collectivization by attributing it to ‘kulaks’, and diverts the blame from the perpetrators – the Communist Party – to the indigenous institution of the clan (*tayp*): Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 152–3.

[90] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 157–61; Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 264; Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti*, vol. I, pp. 250–1; Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 323; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 152.

[91] Bugay, Kudyukina and Khlynina, 'Natsionalnye problemy', p. 10.

[92] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 351–2. For this author the hidden instigators of this conflict were 'Turkish agents' who moved freely about in eastern Caucasus inciting the local people against Soviet Russia.

[93] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 582–5; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 152, 189.

[94] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 285.

[95] Cited in Mekulov, 'Natsionalno-gosudarstvennoye i sovetskoye stroitelstvo', p. 87. This was not the first government resolution to demand acceleration of the indigenization process; similar decrees had been issued, to little effect, in 1931 and 1934: Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 184.

[96] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', pp. 30–1; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 41–2.

[97] In north-west Caucasus in 1897 the Kabardans, Circassians, Abkhaz and Karachay numbered only c. 244,200, and the northern Osetians 171,700, making a total of 415,900; in north-eastern Caucasus the Chechens, Ingush, Kumuks, Nogays, Avars, Dargans, Lezgis, Kazi-Kumukhs and others numbered c. 1,021,900: V. I. Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR: etnodemograficheskiy obzor*, 2nd edn, revised and enlarged, 1982, pp. 37–8.

[98] Yermolin, *Revolyutsiya*, pp. 18–19.

[99] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 77.

[100] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 199–90, 203; *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 215–16, 242–3.

[101] R. Karcha, 'Genocide in the Northern Caucasus', *Caucasian Review*, 1956, vol. 2, p. 76.

[102] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, p. 92; Fleischhauer and Pinkus, *Soviet Germans*, p. 77; A. B. Dzadziyev and L. K. Gostiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Severnoy Osetii*, Moscow, 1994, p. 4; Studenetskaya, *Odezhda*, pp. 207–8; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 138.

[103] Shortly after their formation (*Census* 1926, pp. 58, 63) the population of the north-west Caucasian indigenous territories was approximately:

	total	including
North Osetia	152,000	84% Osetians
Karachay	65,000	81% Karachays
Kabarda-Balkaria	204,000	76% Kabardans and 16% Balkars
Cherkes NR	37,00	7% Cherkes

	0	
Adygey AP	113,000	45% Adygeis

Circassians taken together – Kabardans, Cherkes and Adygeys – amounted to 302,000. In Kabarda in 1921 the total population was 150,582, including: Kabardans 116,057 (77.1%); Osetians 2,926 (1.9%); Kumuks 2,554 (1.7%); Russians 23,737 (15.8%); others 5,308 (3.5%): *Istoriya Kabardy*, p. 224.

[104] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 190.

[105] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 162, 166–9, 176; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 147–8.

[106] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 162, 166, 168, 177; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 49; Kolarz, *Religion*, p. 409; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 193; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 215–16.

[107] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, p. 178.

[108] *Ibid*., pp. 88, 177; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 110; Ya. S. Smirnova, *Semya i semeynyy byt narodov Severnogo Kavkaza: vtoraya polovina XIX–XX v.*, Moscow, 1983, p. 75.

[109] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 83, 85, 138, 169; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 172, 208, 226, 286, 323, 363,

399; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 112, 149–50; Smirnova, *Semya i semeynyy byt*, pp. 45–57, 67–9, 95, 123, 125–8, 130–4, 193; Studenetskaya, *Odezhda*, pp. 56, 160–1; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 150, 174–5, 216–17.

[110] Smirnova, *Semya i semeynyy byt*, p. 144.

[111] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 76–7.

[112] R. Adighe [pseudonym of R. Traho], 'Cherkess cultural life', *Caucasian Review*, 1956, no. 2, p. 85; N. K. Bagayev, *Sovremennyy osetinskiy yazyk. Chast I (fonetika i morfologiya)*, Ordjonikidze, 1965, pp. 72–5; Comrie, *Languages*, p. 199; Isayev, *National Languages*, pp. 232–3; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 190–2, 199, 218, 227, 241, 265, 269, 294, 295, 338–9, 401; vol. II, p. 418; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 111; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 179–80; Wixman, *Language Aspects*, p. 114.

[113] Baytugan, 'North Caucasus', p. 30; Mekulov, 'Natsionalno-gosudarstvennoye i sovetskoye stroitelstvo', pp. 85–7; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 41–2.

[114] R. Traho, 'How collectivisation was carried out in the North Caucasus', *The Caucasus*, 1952, no. 3/8, pp. 16–18.

[115] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, p. 101; *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 242, 250–1; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 130; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 207, 211.

[116] *Istoriya Kabardy*, p. 255; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, pp. 195–6; A. Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR*, London, 1969, p. 172, table; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 135–6; Traho, 'How collectivisation was carried out', pp. 16–17.

[117] *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 243–4, 249–55; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 132–3; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], p. 207.

[118] Karcha, 'Genocide', p. 77.

[119] Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 192.

[120] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 210, 212–13.

[121] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, p. 44; M. Elberd, *Nash dom – Kabardino-Balkariya*, Nalchik, 1978, pp. 55–6; *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 242–3; Karcha, 'Genocide', p. 77; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 96.

[122] Karcha, 'Genocide', p. 77; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 133; Traho, 'How collectivisation was carried out', pp. 17–18.

[123] *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 134.

[124] Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, pp. 274–81; Karcha, 'Genocide', p. 77; Ye. N. Oskolkov, *Golod 1932/1933: khlebozagotovki i golod 1932/1933 goda v Severo-Kavkazskom kraye*, Rostov-on-Don, 1991, pp. 15–20, 40–57.

[125] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 264–5.

[126] Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, pp. 303, 306; D. G. Dalrymple, ‘The Soviet famine of 1932–1934’, *Soviet Studies*, 1964, 15, pp. 257–61; *Istoriya Kabardy*, p. 253; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 134, 157; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 212, 216–17.

[127] Oskolkov, *Golod*, p. 80.

[128] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 6–7; Bugay, ‘Predstavitelstva’, pp. 118, 120n., 123, 128, 130–1, 133–4, 136, 138–41; *Istoriya Kabardy*, p. 225.

[129] Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 137, 139–40.

[130] Figures estimated from *Census* 1897, p. 263 and *Census*, 1926.

[131] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 9–10.

[132] Pliyev, ‘Iz istorii yuzhnoy Osetii’, pp. 10–17; Tekhov, ed., *Ocherki istorii Yugo-Osetinskoy*, vol. I, pp. 288–90; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], p. 130.

[133] Pliyev, ‘Iz istorii yuzhnoy Osetii’, p. 17.

[134] Kazemzadeh, *Struggle*, pp. 192–3; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 228–9; Pliyev, ‘Iz istorii yuzhnoy Osetii’, pp. 18–19; Tekhov, ed., *Ocherki istorii Yugo-Osetinskoy*, vol. I, pp. 291–3.

[135] Because of changing circumstances the exact date is unclear in some cases, e.g. Bashkiria: 17 November 1917 or 22 December 1917; Tatarstan: 19 November 1917 or 28 February 1918; and Lithuania: 11 December 1917, 16 February 1918 or 23 March 1918.

[136] *Fundamental Law (Constitution) of the USSR, together with the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the RSFSR*, Moscow, 1932, pp. 7–11; Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti*, vol. I, p. 159; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, pp. 55–6; Yu. A. Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, pp. 50, 73–6; A. L. Unger, *Constitutional Development in the USSR: A Guide to the Soviet Constitutions*, London, 1981, pp. 61–2, 143.

[137] Pipes, *Formation*, p. 250; Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, p. 64; Unger, *Constitutional Development*, pp. 63–4, 91, 152.

[138] Unger, *Constitutional Development*, pp. 63, 91, 153.

[139] Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, p. 9.

[140] Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, p. 52.

[141] Unger, *Constitutional Development*, pp. 20, 47–9.

[142] USSR, *Fundamental Law*, pp. 8,11, 33; Unger, *Constitutional Development*, pp. 53–4, 60–2.

[143] V. I. Lenin, ‘K peresmotru partiynoy programmy’ [October 1917], *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy*, Moscow, 1977, vol. XXXIV, p. 379.

[144] Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, pp. 77–8.

[145] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. XVI, map of Kuban province between pp. 920–1; T. P. Khlynina, ‘Gorskiye narody Kubanskoy oblasti: “bolshevistskaya model” resheniya natsionalnogo voprosa’, in Bugay and Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 63–4; Mekulov, ‘Natsionalno-gosudarstvennoye i sovetskoye stroitelstvo’, pp. 68–9, 71–2, 82; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 202–3.

[146] *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. I, map opposite cols. 623–4; USSR, Tsentralnoye Statisticheskoye Upravleniye, *Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1959 goda*, Moscow, 1963 [hereafter Census 1959], p. 322; Khlynina, ‘Gorskiye narody Kubanskoy oblasti’, p. 62; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 195; Mekulov, ‘Natsionalno-gosudarstvennoye i sovetskoye stroitelstvo’, pp. 73–4, 87; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 201; *Ocherki istorii Adygei*, map; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VIII, map, pp. 630–1; vol. IX, map, pp. 214–15. Tribes included in the final stage of the ‘autonomous province’ in addition to Shapsugs, Bzhedukhs and Temirgoys were the Mamkheg, some Abadzekhs and Makhosh, and most of the Yegerukoy; by 1959 the AP's 66,000 Adyges formed a minority of 23.2%, with Russians 70% (10,400 Adyges lived elsewhere in Krasnodar province).

[147] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 199; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 49; Khlynina, ‘Gorskiye narody Kubanskoy oblasti’, pp. 57–8; Kolarz, *Religion*, p. 409; Mekulov, ‘Natsionalno-gosudarstvennoye i sovetskoye stroitelstvo’, pp. 69, 75–9.

[148] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 148–50; *Atlas SSSR*, 1983, pl. 183; O. M. Chashcharina, 'Avtonomnye respubliki Severnogo Kavkaza: problemy izmeneniya sotsialnoy struktury', in Bugay and Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 142–56; *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 224, 249; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, pp. 390, 639, 670–1; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], p. 11. The figure in the latter is from the falsified 1939 census.

[149] Blank, 'Soviet conquest of Georgia', p. 43; Blank, 'Transcaucasian Federation', pp. 39–41, 45; Hewitt, 'Yet a third consideration', pp. 294–8; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 266–9; L. Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 2nd edn, revised and enlarged, London, 1970, pp. 230–1; Suny, *Making*, pp. 214–15.

[150] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 114; Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, pp. 58–9; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 241–2; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 266–7, 281; Schapiro, *Communist Party*, 2nd edn, pp. 230–2; Suny, *Making*, pp. 216–18.

[151] Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 276–7, 282–9; Schapiro, *Communist Party*, 2nd edn, pp. 230–2.

[152] Blank, 'Transcaucasian Federation', pp. 46–50; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 268, 273–5, 281–2; Suny, *Making*, pp. 215–16.

[153] Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 100–1; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 241–4; D. M. Lang, 'Religion and nationalism: a case study: the Caucasus', in W. C. Fletcher and M. Hayward,

eds., *Religion and the Soviet State: a Dilemma of Power*, London, 1969, p. 178; Melia, ‘The Georgian Orthodox Church’, p. 229; Suny, *Making*, pp. 222–4, 228, 364 n. 52. Formerly it was said that Amvrosi died in prison.

[154] Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 130–3; S. Zaldasṭanishvili, *Sakartvelos 1924 tṣlis ambokheba*, Munich, 1956 (reprint edited by G. Maghularia, Tbilisi, 1994).

[155] Blank, ‘Transcaucasian Federation’, pp. 34–5, 41–51; Sonyel, *Turkish Diplomacy*, pp. 132–5.

[156] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 126–7; Guliyev, *K istorii obrazovaniya Nagorno-Karabakhskoy*, pp. 8, 152–3.

[157] The definition of the borders of the Highland Karabagh AP was not completed until 1923. In maps under ‘Azerbaijan SSR’ and ‘Armenian SSR’ in the first multi-volume Soviet encyclopedia, Karabagh's cartography is extremely approximate; however, neither map shows its border touching that of Armenia across the river Akera (in Azerbaijani ‘Häkäri’), as is suggested by Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 127: then as now, apparently, a narrow corridor (about 5 km wide) of Azerbaijan's Lachin district separated Karabagh's Shushi district from Goris district of Armenia: *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. I, map opp. cols. 639–40; vol. III, map opp. cols. 415–16.

[158] S. M. Kirov, [report to the sixth Congress of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, May 1924], quoted in Guliyev, *K istorii obrazovaniya Nagorno-Karabakhskoy*, p. 9.

[159] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 103–5, 127–8; Polyakov, *Sovetskaya strana*, pp. 67–8 n. 159.

[160] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, pp. 644–5; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, pp. 119, 120; T. B. Ryabushkin, *et al*., eds., *Naseleniye soyuznykh respublik*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 141, 274, 278; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 146, 222–4, 270–1 n. 3.

[161] Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 152, 154; M. K. Matossian, *The Impact of Soviet Policies in Armenia*, Westport, CT, 1962, pp. 11, 63–9; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 144. Sources of the 1920s--30s quoted by Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 150–1 n. 6a.

[162] Kolarz, *Religion*, p. 155; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 47–9; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 222; Y. Ternon, *La cause arménienne*, Paris, 1983, pp. 119–25.

[163] F. Corley, 'The Armenian Church under the Soviet regime, Part 1: the leadership of Kevork [VI]', *Religion, State and Society*, 1996, 24, 1, p. 43; Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 154, 156; M. K. Krikorian, 'The Armenian church in the Soviet Union 1917–1967', in Marshall, *et al*., eds., *Aspects of Religion*, pp. 241, 245; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 149–51.

[164] Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 3–11, 63–73; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 494, 524–5, 527, 533, 534.

[165] According to N. S. Khrushchov, the figure for Georgian illiteracy was 78%: Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 266.

[166] Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, pp. 119, 120; Lorimer, *Population of the Soviet Union*, p. 55; B. Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: the History of a National Minority*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 91, 265; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 383, 386.

[167] Chaliand, ed., *People without a Country*, pp. 220–2; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edn, p. 949; Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 427; Kinnane, *Kurds and Kurdistan*, p. 2; Lorimer, *Population*, p. 58 (here the 1926 Census figure for Yazidis is shown as if separate from Kurds; it should probably be included under Kurds); *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 602–3.

[168] Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 272–3; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edn, vol. VIII, pp. 264, 612–13; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 38, 213, 440, 603, 617–18; *Narody mira*, p. 73.

[169] Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 287; Lorimer, *Population*, p. 56; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 421–5.

[170] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, pp. 440–2, ethnographic map between pp. 16 and 17; Ryabushkin, *et al.*, eds., *Naseleniye*, p. 168; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 386.

[171] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. XVII, pp. 129, 132; vol. XXXIII, p. 264; B. K. Kharebov, ‘Demograficheskoye razvitiye Yuzhnoy Osetii za gody Sovetskoy vlasti’, in Tekhov, ed., *Yuzhnaya Osetiya v period stroitelstva sotsializma*, p. 177; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 90.

[172] Before 1917, while some sources asserted that the various peoples of Georgia (Tiflis and Kutaisi provinces) ‘constitute one and the same people speaking one and the same Georgian language, which displays only minor differences in various areas’ (*Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. IX, ‘Gruziny’, p. 792), others clearly distinguished between the ‘true’ (Kartli-Kakheti) Georgians of Tiflis province and the other Kartvelian peoples of western Georgia, e.g. by listing the ethnic percentages within the latter as ‘Georgians 1.48%’, followed by ‘Imeretians 44.83%, Gurians 8.24%, Megrelians and Laz 23.3%, Svans 1.52%, Achars 6.43%’ – a total of 84.25% explicitly designated as ‘non-Georgians’ (*Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, ‘Kutaisskaya guberniya’, p. 132).

[173] K. Danilina, ‘Izucheniye truda i byta adzharok’, *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1932, no. 5/6, pp. 228–31.

[174] Groshev, *Bratskoye sodruzhestvo*, pp. 360, 362–5; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, p. 547; Suny, *Making*, p. 244.

[175] C. Mouradian, ‘Statut des langues, statut des nationalités en URSS: le cas arménien’, *Raison présente*, 1988, no. 6, p. 122. Another, equally inadequate, explanation of the exception of the Armenian and Georgian alphabets was that ‘the [Armenian] orthography was modified, even though the alphabet resisted the Cyrillicization policy’: G. Dedeyan, ed., *Histoire des arméniens*, Toulouse, 1982 [reprinted, 1986], p. 540. The reason for exempting the Georgians and Armenians from the general change to Cyrillic was certainly not that they already knew Russian and its script so well that they did not need to become familiarized with them: as late as 1970 ‘Transcaucasia’ was, along with Central Asia (and the Russian republic!) one of the regions of

the USSR with the lowest percentage of people claiming bilingualism in Russian (A. Ya. Boyarskiy, *Naseleniye SSSR: spravochnik*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 84, 102; USSR, Tsentralnoye Statisticheskoye Upravleniye, *Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1970 goda*, Moscow, 1973 [hereafter Census 1970], vol. IV, p. 9; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 232.

[176] In 1954, however, soon after Stalin's death, South Osetia also went over to the Cyrillic alphabet used in North Osetia: Bagayev, *Sovremennyy osetinskiy yazyk*, p. 75.

[177] In fact since the creation of the first Cyrillic-based alphabet in 1862, Abkhazian has had five alphabets: 1862–1926 Cyrillic-based; 1926–8 N. Ya. Marr's ‘analytical alphabet’; 1928–38 Latin; 1938–54 Georgian; 1954-- Cyrillic See Hewitt, *Abkhazians*, pp. 170–1; *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. IV, pp. 101–2.

[178] Isayev, *National Languages*, p. 269; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 143–7, 163–4; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 154; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 150–2.

[179] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953, vol. I, p. 101; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 52–3, 62; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 143–4.

[180] *Istoriya Gruzii: uchebnoye posobiye*, edited by N. V. Natmeladze and N. I. Sturua, 3 vols., Tbilisi, 1968, vol. III, pp. 3–4; Suny, *Making*, pp. 225–30, 239–40.

[181] Suny, *Making*, pp. 232–3.

[182] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 114–16; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 231; Suny, *Making*, pp. 240–3.

[183] Suny, *Making*, pp. 235, 243, 251.

[184] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 122; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 119–21; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 146–7; Suny, *Making*, pp. 233, 235.

[185] *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 1335; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 52 and n. 1a, 73–5; Schapiro, *Communist Party*, 2nd edn, pp. 302–11; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 147, 157; Suny, *Making*, pp. 234–5, 239, 366 n. 26.

[186] Suny, *Making*, pp. 228, 235, 238–45, 366 n. 26.

[187] Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 247–9.

[188] A. Atan, ‘Hay Kiank’, *Hayrenik Amsagir*, 1930, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 168–9, quoted by Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 103–4; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 249; Suny, *Making*, p. 246; T. I. Zhgenti, *Istoriya kolkhoznogo stroitelstva v Gruzii (1921–1950 gg.)*, Tbilisi, 1977, pp. 89–92, 105–6.

[189] The provinces most nearly comparable with ‘Transcaucasia’ in population size were Azov--Black Sea/Don and Lower Volga with 30,933 deported families (155,000 people or 2.7% of the population), Belorussia with 15,724 (79,000 people or 1.6% of the population) and Western province with 7,308 (36,500 or 0.73% of the whole): Census

1937, [pt. 1], pp. 16–18; [pt. 2] p. 59; Zemskov, ‘Spetsposelentsy’, pp. 3–4.

[190] Suny, *Making*, p. 253.

[191] Schapiro, *Communist Party*, 2nd edn, pp. 395–6; Suny, *Making*, pp. 242–7, 250–3.

[192] Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 103–6, 108–9, 116; Suny, *Making*, p. 247.

[193] Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 251; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 109–10; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 94–5; Suny, *Making*, pp. 255–6.

[194] A. Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant*, Princeton, 1993, pp. 4–8, 11–14, 16–18, 20–3, 35; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 131; Suny, *Making*, p. 263; D. A. Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*, edited and translated from Russian by H. Shukman, London, 1991, pp. 331–2.

[195] P. N. Lomashvili, *Velikiy perevorot*, Tbilisi, 1972, pp. 312–14, quoted in Suny, *Making*, pp. 249–51.

[196] Knight, *Beria*, pp. 36–46; Suny, *Making*, pp. 252–3, 263, 368 n. 58; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 332.

[197] Suny, *Making*, p. 264.

[198] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 332.

[199] N. Janberidze and K. Machabeli, *Tbilisi. Mtskheta*, Moscow, 1981, pp. 117, 120, 134–8, 142, 145–7; G. Khutsishvili, *Tbilisi: a Guide*, Moscow, 1981, p. 61; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, pp. 176–7.

[200] Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 108, 126; Suny, *Making*, pp. 265–8.

[201] Suny, *Making*, pp. 268, 271.

[202] L. Beria, *On the History of the Bolshevik Organizations in Transcaucasia*, translated from 7th Russian edn, Moscow, 1949; Suny, *Making*, p. 277; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 212–13.

[203] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 146–7.

[204] It is believed that A. Khanjyan, the first secretary of the Armenian KP, was shot by Beria in person: A. Rybakov, *Tridtsat pyatyy i drugiye gody: roman*, vol. I, Moscow, 1989, pp. 193–4, 198.

[205] A. Avtorkhanov [Ouralov], *Staline au pouvoir*, Paris, 1952, pp. 163, 170, cited in Z. K. Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge: Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism*, Cambridge, MA., 1956, p. 189; R. Conquest, *The Great Terror: a Reassessment*, London, 1992, pp. 226–7, 302; Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror*, pp. 125–6, 136–9, 155–9, 175–7, 198, 235–6, 255–7, 267–8, 275–9, 282–4, 327, 362–5, 382–6, 391–3, 398–402, 413, 417–18, 473, 490–3; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 128–9; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, pp. 101, 269, 551, 563, 821, 867, 1335, 1459; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 139, 147, 151–3, 155, 156–7.

[206] The continuing influence of Stalin and Beria in Georgia as late as 1968 is illustrated by a textbook of Georgian history which states in connection with such ‘saboteurs’ that ‘the unmasking of the subversive work of class enemies was facilitated by the political vigilance of the great mass of toilers in town and countryside and the mass political work of party organizations’: *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. III, p. 105.

[207] Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 119, 141, 143; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 211–12, 245; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 126–8, 129, 141–3.

[208] A. Surguladze and P̣. Surguladze, *sakartvelos isṭoria: saḳitkhavi tṣigni*, [vol. II], Tbilisi, 1992, p. 278. This view seems valid, as a calculation of these numbers of victims as a percentage of the total numbers of these nationalities in the 1937 USSR Census gives: 0.88% of all Russians, 0.69% of Ukrainians, 0.74% of Jews, 0.58% of Georgians, 0.56% of Armenians, 0.43% of Uzbeks, and 0.38% of Tajiks Census 1937, [pts 1, 2 and 3], esp., pp. 58–9, ‘Ethnic composition of the USSR according to the 1937 Census).

[209] This figure, considerably exceeding that given above in n. 207, comes from: Brzezinski, *Permanent Purge*, p. 189; Conquest, *Great Terror*, pp. 68, 224–6; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, pp. 385, 812, 1311, 1498; Hewitt, *Abkhazians*, pp. 94–6; Levytsky, *Stalinist Terror*, pp. 220–8, 242–3, 285–7, 313, 326, 333–4, 436, 469–71; Suny, *Making*, pp. 262–79.

[210] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 131–9, 141–50, 276 n. 4; Brzezinski, *Permanent Purge*, p. 189; Conquest, *Great Terror*, p. 222; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, pp. 92, 96, 821, 859, 1583; A. Djavadi, ‘Glasnost’ and Soviet Azerbaijani literature’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1990, 9, no. 1, pp. 98–101;

Levytskyy, *Stalinist Terror*, pp. 229–31, 239–42, 327–30, 416, 423–5, 463–5; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, p. 168; Tekiner, ‘Azerbaijan’, pp. 56–60.

[211] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 291; Agayev, ‘Bezzakoniya 30-kh godov; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 765; Gökburi, ‘Yazyk i kultura’, pp. 14–15; *Istoriya Dagestana*, vol. III, pp. 193, 299.

[212] Adzhiyev, ‘I snova kumyk o kumykakh’, p. 102; A. Umalatov, *Ot Stalina do nashikh dney*, Makhachkala, 1993, pp. 8–9, 35–9.

[213] Broxup, ‘Last *ghazawat*’, p. 143.

[214] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 209.

[215] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 161–5; Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 209–16; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 152.

[216] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 157–61, 165.

[217] Some 3.2% of the total population.

[218] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 155, 174–9; Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 507, 525–6; Bugay, Kudyukina and Khlynina, ‘Natsionalnye problemy v istoriografii’, p. 14.

[219] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 175, 181–2; L. Usmanov, *Nepokorennaya Chechnya*, Moscow, 1997, p. 82.

[220] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 284–5; Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 155, 159, 177; Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 45–6, 390; *Bolshaya Sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. XXX, col. 416; Conquest, *Great Terror*, p. 389; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 534. *Istoriya Kabardy* (1957), pp. 285–6, 367, does not mention the Terror at all, but Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya* (1937), pp. 6–7, 155, 179, echoes the propaganda of that time, implying ubiquitous sabotage at construction sites, collective farms, factories and schools, and within the Communist Party itself, by ‘Trotskiyite and Bukharinist agents of fascism and bourgeois-nationalist traitors to the motherland’ – ‘enemies of the people’, who prejudiced the territory's achievements. The author (or a KPSS editor) adds his voice to the strident demands for ‘merciless annihilation of the enemies of the party and people – Japanese--German, Trotskiyite--Bukharinist spies, bourgeois-nationalists, saboteurs and murderers’.

[221] *Istoriya Kabardy* (1957), pp. 285–6, 367.

[222] Anisimov, *Kabardino-Balkariya*, pp. 6–7, 155, 179.

[223] F. Urusbiyeva, ‘Drama na fone gor’, *Druzhba narodov*, 1989, no. 5, p. 171.

[224] Alekseyenko, *Repressii na Kubani*, pp. 13, 88–91, 94.

14 The Second World War, Beria and Stalin

Russia's ‘Great War of the Fatherland’

Soviet Russia was quite unprepared for war when Adolf Hitler's armies struck on 22 June 1941. The Soviet dictator disregarded warnings about the impending invasion of the Soviet Union, to which Hitler was explicitly committed, thus leading to the systematic dismissal of many reliable intelligence reports and the punishment of any adviser who dared to draw Stalin's attention to them.[1] In the words of a Chechen historian,

> The general lines of [Hitler's] ‘Barbarossa Plan’ for the invasion of Russia were being drafted in Hitler's head even as the…[Hitler--Stalin] pact was being signed. All this was being written about openly…in democratic countries, and it was only [our] ‘brilliant leader and teacher’ and his clique who were incapable of divining the devious intentions of the corporal in Berlin. This was the main reason that, at dawn on 22 June 1941, Soviet troops along a broad front came under attack by German aircraft powered by Soviet petrol, behind which came German tanks also powered by Soviet petrol, and behind them German infantry nourished by Soviet grain.[2]

As a result of the Red Army's unpreparedness and poor organization, the first stages of ‘lightning warfare’ went well for the Germans, as one army tore through the Baltic republics to within 50 miles of Leningrad by the end of August, while a second army thrust eastwards from Poland, overrunning Belorussia and advancing more than 400 miles towards Moscow by October. In the south, a third army occupied western Ukraine by the end of August, Kiev fell on 20 September and, although the Germans encountered stiffer resistance as they moved farther east, they took Kharkiv in November and overran Crimea in mid-1942.[3] In June 1942 the Germans advanced to the Don, and in September began their main assault on the Volga at Stalingrad. Meanwhile, a smaller force moved south across the Don, occupied the Kuban and advanced towards the Caucasus, taking Stavropol, Krasnodar, Maykop and Pyatigorsk, and reaching Mozdok on the Terek – the farthest limit of their invasion. The Nazis laid claim to Mount Elbrus, but failed to reach their ultimate goal – the important Groznyy oilfield in Chechenia or the much greater Caspian field at Baku, from which Hitler had hoped to obtain inexhaustible supplies of fuel.

In 1941 whole Soviet armies were encircled and enormous numbers of prisoners were taken: 300,000 in Belorussia, 300,000 at Smolensk, 100,000 in southern Ukraine, more than 600,000 at Kiev and 600,000 on the Moscow front. By the end of the year the Germans held more than 3.8 million Soviet prisoners, most of whom were herded into barbed-wire enclosures without shelter, food or sanitation, so that, apart from those executed, huge numbers died of starvation, cold and disease.[4]

Nazi racism and Soviet collaboration

Hitler had put into practice with great thoroughness the racist clichés and prejudices which were current in central and eastern Europe. He was particularly abetted in the establishment of National Socialism by the Baltic German Alfred Rosenberg, a refugee from the Russian Civil War. Through him Hitler met the most dedicated anti-socialist and anti-Jewish émigrés – not only Russians, but former non-Russian subjects of the empire, now bitterly opposed to Soviet Russia, who congregated in Warsaw, Prague and Germany, forming numerous political associations, including the Prometheus society, which provided a focus for many Caucasian and other exiles. Through Rosenberg's patronage Nazi Germany took up Prometheus, whose members were moved to Berlin after 1939 to carry out spurious 'ethnic research'.[5] Under German occupation the Poles, Ukrainians, Belorussians and Russians quickly learned that Nazi racist doctrine applied not only to Jews and Gypsies, but also to them. The Slavs were an inferior 'hotch-potch'; on the other hand, the Germans with their racial and cultural 'superiority' had a 'divine mission' to colonize eastern Europe and civilize its inhabitants. This summary represents the relatively *liberal* view favoured by Rosenberg, who became the German Minister for the Occupied East. In practice an even cruder doctrine prevailed: to Hitler the 'Russians' were 'animals' designated as 'subhumans'.[6]

Although thousands of people in the western USSR fled before the German advance, many welcomed the Germans as liberators from the Soviet régime.[7] Similarly, many Soviet soldiers – by no means fascist in outlook – took the first opportunity to surrender to the enemy, and willingly worked with them against the Soviet Union.[8] Some Soviet officers urged their captors to utilize the anti-communist potential of deserters and prisoners of war forming Russian military units.

This proposal was hampered above all by Hitler, who personally rejected the use of Slavs as front-line troops, and it was only in November 1944, when Germany's situation was critical, that permission was given to form a ‘Russian Liberation Army’ under A. A. Vlasov, who had been one of the Red Army's best generals. Hitler did, however, make exceptions for the Cossacks, Kalmyks, Crimean Tatars and other ‘Turkic’ peoples.[9] Recruitment of Muslim prisoners of war as auxiliary troops began as early as October 1941, and by August 1942 six ‘Eastern Legions’ had been formed, with a total of about 60,000 men of many nationalities, amounting to more than fifty field battalions. Among these, the ‘Caucasian--Muslim Legion’ consisted of Azerbaijanis; the ‘Georgian Legion’ included south Osetians; the ‘Armenian Legion’ had a high proportion of men from Karabagh; and the ‘North Caucasian Legion’ included Circassians, Abkhazians, north Osetians, Chechens, Ingush, Kumyks, Nogays and Daghestanis.[10]

The Cossacks in the Second World War

Hitler made another exception in the case of the Cossacks, since he believed that the Don and Kuban Cossacks were not Slavs, but belonged to the ‘Aryan’ race.[11] Many former Cossack leaders had gone to live in France or Germany after the Civil War, nursing their hatred of the Soviet régime and awaiting the opportunity to fight against it again. The most influential of these was the 71-year-old ex-ataman of the Don, P. Krasnov, who dreamed of the day when there would again be a Russian army of ‘Orthodox warriors of Christ’ to bring God's vengeance to Russia.[12] Such fascist convictions among Russian exiles coincided with Nazi doctrines, and indeed Krasnov accepted Hitler as ‘supreme dictator of the

Cossack nation',[13] as did the ex-ataman of the Kuban, V. Naumenko and former general A. Shkuro.

Amid the general revival of Russian patriotism in the USSR, Cossack military units had been reinstated in 1936, and put 100,000 men into the field when the German invasion began. Under such commanders as L. M. Dovator their horsemen provided many examples of reckless heroism – although cavalry was obsolete in modern tank warfare and their losses were heavy.[14] It was also a Cossack officer, I. N. Kononov, who in August 1941 led the first large-scale defection to the Germans of a whole regiment. Later that year the German High Command sanctioned the formation of Cossack units, and recruitment among prisoners of war was so successful that by summer 1942 anti-Soviet Cossack forces numbered some 20,000 men.[15] When the Germans occupied the Kuban and part of the Don, much of the Cossack population welcomed them with bread and salt, and whole *stanitsa*s went over to the German side.[16]

German officers who favoured friendly treatment of the local population tried this out in the Kuban, where Colonel C. S. von Stauffenberg forestalled Rosenberg by obtaining Hitler's sanction to keep North Caucasus under military administration. There was no conscription for forced labour and, as well as granting a degree of autonomy to the Circassians, the military command instituted a self-governing Kuban Cossack district. What the population wanted most of all here, as everywhere else, was the dissolution of collective farms and a return to individual farming, but the Germans, for their own ends, postponed implementing this and exploited the grain harvest as they did in Ukraine.[17]

In any case, German occupation of the Caucasus did not last long: early in 1943, as their situation at Stalingrad became critical, they hurriedly withdrew. Along with the retreating Germans about a million Cossack refugees fled west to Ukraine. A host of several thousand Cossacks was stationed in Belorussia. Other Cossack regiments were formed in Ukraine, a German proclamation promised the establishment of a Cossack state after the war, and Krasnov proceeded to organize a Cossack government-in-exile.[18]

Like the Germans' other 'Eastern troops', the Cossacks were removed from the eastern front in 1944, one division being sent to Yugoslavia to fight against Tito's communists, while the 20,000-strong Cossack division of General Vlasov's army went to northern Italy. The last months of the war brought great anxiety to the Cossack community about the consequences of their gamble on collaboration with the Germans, and they moved north towards Austria in the hope that the British would recognize them as allies in a continuation war against the USSR. Although most of the Cossack soldiers were Soviet citizens, two-thirds of their officers were émigrés who had fought against the Bolsheviks in the Civil War, and therefore assumed that at worst the British would treat them as prisoners of war. However, in the euphoria of victory the British government hastened to please Stalin by complying with agreements made at the Moscow and Yalta conferences, whereby all Soviet prisoners must be handed over to the Russians, whether they wanted repatriation or not. Nearly all of the Cossacks were handed over by the British army to the NKVD and a perfectly predictable fate: the rank and file – including women and children – were sent straight to Soviet concentration camps, while their leaders, including Krasnov, were hanged in Moscow.[19] The defeat of Nazi Germany was followed by the disbandment of the remaining Cossack units – which appeared to mean the final disappearance of the Cossacks from history as a military and ethnic group.

The Kalmyks

In summer 1942, before the siege of Stalingrad began, Hitler ordered an advance to the south-east to seize Ukraine's remaining grain-producing districts and coalfields and, by striking across North Caucasus, to reach the oil wells of Maykop, Groznyy and eventually Baku. On 30 July German armies crossed the lower Don and poured into the Sal steppe. As there were practically no Soviet forces between there and Mozdok, 320 miles to the south-east, the way lay open to Stavropol, which was captured on 5 August. From here, on the Germans' left the steppes of the Kalmyk ASSR stretched towards the Caspian coast, undefended by either the Stalingrad front or the Astrakhan garrison. One Nazi motorized infantry division sufficed to capture its capital, Elista, and take sole military responsibility for Kalmykia. From there the Germans struck out north-eastwards towards Astrakhan on the Volga delta, but they never reached the Caspian. At Khulkhuta, only 82 miles short of Astrakhan – the most easterly point reached by the Germans on any front – they were stopped by Soviet troops guarding the Astrakhan--Terek railway (which had just been completed by Kalmyk workers).[20] The invasion paralysed KPSS officials in Elista, preventing the evacuation of people and livestock across the Volga, with the result that the Germans found much grain and 670,000 head of cattle awaiting them. Despite pro-German rumours, the occupation was serious: about 2,000 civilians and Soviet prisoners were shot for offering resistance, and Jews were systematically murdered.[21]

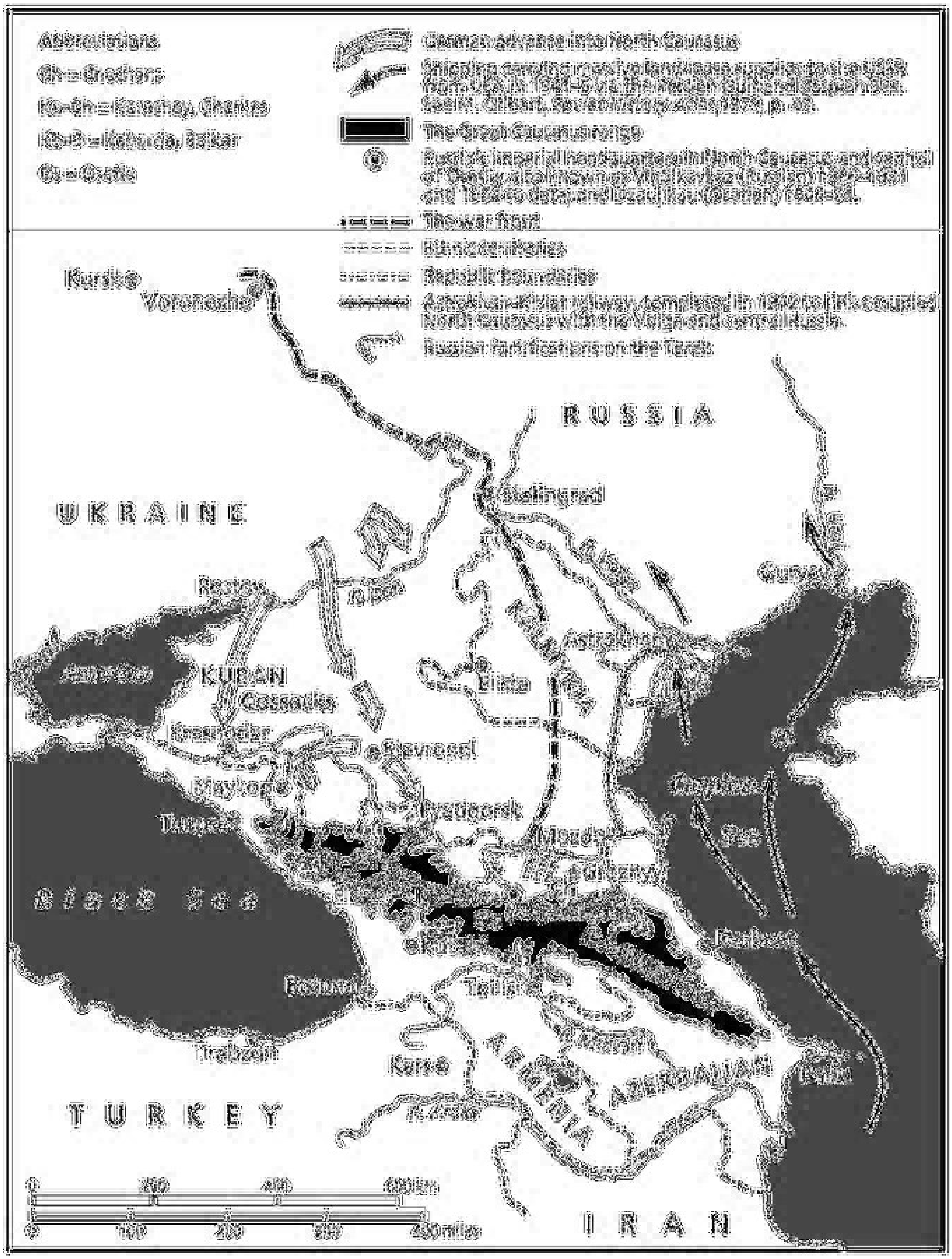
Long before the Germans invaded the USSR the Kalmyks had reason to hate the Soviet Russian régime, which had destroyed their nomadic way of life and Buddhist religion by induced class conflict and forced collectivization. It also banned them from military service until 1927, when they were again recruited.[22] By 1937 about 1,700 were in regular service, and in 1941 the Red Army included more than 5,000 – although Kalmyk units sent into battle were under particular NKVD surveillance. Nevertheless, as the German front advanced towards the Don some Kalmyks deserted and joined anti-Soviet partisans, encouraged by rumours that the German troops were friendly towards them. Indeed, German army units were instructed to behave 'correctly' towards the local population in the Caucasus – that is, without the licence for brutal treatment which applied in Poland and Russia. Documents leave little doubt that the majority of Kalmyks welcomed the Germans, who had planned for good relations by attaching scholarly specialists to the invading units (B. von Richthofen and Dr O. Doll) as well as Kalmyk émigrés from Berlin. These intermediaries conveyed the Nazis' ostensible intention of founding a 'free Kalmyk state', and formed a Kalmyk 'National Committee' as well as appointing native burgomasters and police. Among the benefits they promised were personal ownership of livestock, the abolition of collective farms and a return to nomadism. The few lamas who had survived persecution also welcomed the Germans and gladly co-operated with Doll in relations with the population, which included issuing a Russian-language newspaper *Free Land*. Estimates of the number of Kalmykia's inhabitants – Russian as well as Kalmyk – who responded to German 'friendship' vary between 2,200 and 'half of the population', perhaps 63,000.[23]

The most important piece of Kalmyk collaboration was the formation of a cavalry detachment numbering 3,200 men. These Kalmyk horsemen came into action against the Red Army as the latter began to reoccupy Kalmykia from the north on the eve of the Russian advance from Stalingrad. When Soviet troops recaptured Elista (1 January 1943) they immediately began to punish collaborators – leaving the Kalmyk cavalry little choice but to retreat with the German army. After rearguard action on the lower Don they moved west through Ukraine, where they were in action against Soviet guerrillas near Kryvyy Rih, then into Poland, where many of the Kalmyks were killed in January 1945. Their remnants, incorporated into General Vlasov's troops under the Committee for Liberation of the Peoples of Russia in Yugoslavia, were among those who were slaughtered by Serbian communists or handed over by the British to the NKVD, with the inevitable consequence of 'repatriation' to the USSR and execution or incarceration in prison camps.[24]

Meanwhile the same fate descended upon the much greater number of Kalmyks who remained in the USSR. Ironically, punishment for belonging to the same people as the Kalmyk collaborationists fell first upon those who were fighting loyally for the USSR, including the Special Kalmyk Cavalry Division which had taken part in defending the Don east of Rostov in summer 1942. On the basis of rumours that this division was planning treachery, the Russians disbanded it in January 1943 and sent its men to labour battalions. The civilian inhabitants of the Kalmyk ASSR too were victimized: in February 1943 its whole KPSS committee was 'purged', and as many more ordinary members were 'punished', some KP leaders began to express suspicion of the whole Kalmyk people. While the republic's children received congratulations from Stalin on collecting 8 million rubles for tanks and war planes, Beria persuaded the State Defence Committee to deport the entire ‘unreliable’ Kalmyk people to Siberia.[25] Stalin, without even glancing through Beria's spurious charges against a whole nation, accepted his word, and sanctioned the deportation of tens of thousands of Kalmyks.[26] On 27 December 1943 the secret decree was signed by Kalinin, and the Kalmyk ASSR ceased to exist.[27] For the Kalmyks, like all deported peoples, this came as a total surprise: a military operation at dawn on 28 December in which everyone, including Communist Party and Young Communist League members, Soviet officials, and all families except Kalmyk women having Russian husbands, were packed into lorries (recently supplied by the USA as aid for the Soviet war effort) and embarked on freight trains for remote destinations to north and east. There the Kalmyk people were scattered as ‘special settlers’ in concentration camps from the Urals to Sakhalin and from Uzbekistan to Taymyr, and their children deprived of education by their poor knowledge of Russian and lack of winter clothing.[28] This deportation was performed in three days, but worse followed. In January 1944 the Red Army was ordered to demobilize all Kalmyk soldiers and hand them over to the NKVD. Officers were imprisoned in Novosibirsk and Altay provinces, while men were sent to labour camps at a hydroelectric construction site near Perm. Then it was the turn of more than 10,000 Kalmyk Cossacks living in Rostov and Stalingrad provinces to be despatched to Siberian prison camps. The territory of Kalmykia was divided up between neighbouring provinces, Elista was renamed ‘Stepnoy’, and the name ‘Kalmyk’ was expunged from all reference books, as if the Kalmyks had never existed. Not until 13 years later were the Kalmyks permitted to return to their homeland, and their autonomous province was reinstated in February 1957 – but many years passed before its economy and institutions regained their previous level.[29]

German occupation of North Caucasus

After capturing Rostov in July 1942, the German army had thrust southwards through the Kuban and Circassia, and by mid August reached Krasnodar, Maykop and Stavropol (see Map 23). Aiming to cross the Caucasus range into Georgia, alpine divisions drove up the valleys to the main passes, and on 21 August the German flag was raised on the summit of Mount Elbrus in Balkar territory. Despite this triumphal gesture, in the adjacent mountains of Karachay they encountered resistance from local guerrillas, NKVD detachments and Caucasian troops, who fought desperate battles against superior forces until December. Meanwhile the Germans continued to advance swiftly eastwards across the steppe from Stavropol, capturing Mozdok on 24 August, but were stopped short of Groznyy by a determined Russian defence. Their progress was slower amid the Caucasus foothills, but on 2 November they took Nalchik and advanced towards Ordjonikidze (Vladikavkaz's official name since 1931) and the mountain road to Georgia. Strong concentrations of Soviet troops here withstood their attacks until December, when the Soviet counter-offensive began. Thus the Germans never penetrated into the Chechen-Ingush ASSR beyond the north-western border of Ingushia.[30]


Abbreviations
Ch = Chechens
Ka-Ch = Karachay, Cherkes
Ka-B = Kabarda, Balkar
Os = Ossetia
German advance into North Caucasus
The Great Caucasus range
The war front
Ethnic territories
Republic boundaries
Russian fortifications on the Terek
Kursk
Voronezh
RUSSIA
UKRAINE
Stalingrad
Volga
Don
Guryev
KALMYKIA
Rostov
Astrakhan
Azov Sea
KUBAN
Cossacks
Elista
Krasnodar
Stavropol
Maykop
Pyatigorsk
Tuapse
Mozdok
Grozny
Caspian
Sea
Black Sea
Derbent
Sukhumi
Tbilisi
Batumi
Trabzon
Kars
Araks
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
Baku
TURKEY
IRAN
0
200
400
600 km
0
100
200
300
400 miles

Map 23 The German occupation of North Caucasus, July 1942--March 1943.

Accordingto Soviet accounts, during the German occupation of North Caucasus the local population underwent the same tribulations as in other regions, with mass executions of hostages at any sign of armed resistance or sabotage. As elsewhere, the Germans administered the occupied territory through locally recruited burgomasters and police, with whose assistance communists were traced and killed, as were the small Jewish communities, and towards the end of the four-and-a-half month occupation some young people were abducted to Germany as slave labour.[31] In fact, however, this was probably the part of the USSR where the civilian inhabitants suffered least under occupation. In accordance with policies agreed in Berlin, the German troops behaved in a friendly way towards the local population. In anticipation of their arrival, anti-communist revolts occurred in the Muslim regions, particularly the Karachay AP and Chechen-Ingush ASSR. In the capital of Karachay province the Germans were welcomed by a local committee headed by a school-teacher who was appointed burgomaster, and later a Karachay National Committee chaired by Kadi Bayramukov was recognized as the native government. Similarly in Nalchik the Germans sanctioned a Kabarda-Balkar administration led by a lawyer, Selim Shadov. Whether similar collaboration occurred among the Adygeys of Krasnodar province is not clear: their homeland south of the river Kuban was occupied for six months, and for much of that time heavy fighting continued, especially around Maykop.[32]

Nazi plans for the Caucasus were as vicious as elsewhere, but the treatment of the Caucasian peoples was relatively considerate because here the army (and not Rosenberg's ‘East Ministry’ or the SS) kept the upper hand, and its commanders included some of the least Nazified officers, such as von Stauffenberg and F. W. von der Schulenburg.[33] In northern Kuban, to the west of Tikhoretskaya, they created an experimental self-governing Cossack region, whose governor, Colonel Tarasenko, hoped to turn it into a free Cossack state. The inhabitants of Balkaria and Karachay received cultural and economic autonomy and, as one people sharing the same language, were at last allowed to form a combined Karachay-Balkar administration. Interference by the occupiers was minimal, because they saw themselves as temporary overlords whose role would disappear after the war when North Caucasus would become independent. Mosques and churches were reopened, and the decollectivization of farms was permitted in mountainous livestock-herding areas, although it was discouraged in the grain-growing areas of Kabarda-Circassia and Stavropol. Permission to celebrate Islamic festivals gave German commanders an opportunity to attend the Uraza Bayram and Kurban Bayram in October and December; gifts were exchanged and the Germans announced that collective farms would be abolished and a Karachay cavalry unit formed. So far as collaboration is concerned, Isyak Khalayev, a Balkar whose services as a mountain guide gained him officer rank, was the son of a farmer-mullah in the upper Chegem gorge; his father, brother and seven other relatives had been shot as 'class enemies' by the Bolsheviks, and three others sent to concentration camps. He joined the Balkar underground resistance in the 1920s, and in 1938 was condemned to ten years' imprisonment in Nalchik. Escaping in August 1942, he joined an anti-communist partisan group in the mountains. 'It was no wonder, then, that he saw the Germans as liberators and placed himself wholeheartedly at the disposal of the Wehrmacht' as a capable leader. Characteristically, in contrast with the Balkars, the Kabardans were 'somewhat reserved' and, in any case, by December only two more weeks of German occupation remained, so that there was no time for von Stauffenberg to carry out his plans to demonstrate the effectiveness of the 'Eastern troops' scheme. The total number of North Caucasian soldiers who out of hatred of the Soviet Russian régime defected to the Germans was c. 28,000 men and 175 officers.[34]

On the other hand, from the first days of the war the Soviet authorities had enrolled Karachay and Circassian volunteers, many of whom served in guerrilla units on the mountain passes, and more than 200 were killed fighting the Germans. Other Cherkes and Karachays who had been in the Red Army when the German invasion began were among the thousands of prisoners of war held in Belorussia and Ukraine. About 200 of these escaped and joined the anti-German partisans in the forests, where several received decorations for gallantry.[35]

Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Stalingrad battle

The Germans' swift advance across North Caucasus in pursuit of petroleum supplies until stopped in a dead end at Malgobek and Elkhotovo, is usually presented as a self-contained campaign isolated from the rest of the war, but this was not the case. Although the battleground of Stalingrad lay 350 miles to the north, beyond the largely empty prairie and semi-desert of Kalmykia, so that only the extreme north of Kalmyk territory was involved in the Stalingrad front, and no other front was formed there, in fact 'the Battle of Stalingrad and the Caucasus campaign…took place simultaneously and were closely linked in operational and strategic terms'.[36] Indeed, war activity around these two fronts was conducted on a grand scale.

By November 1942, with the German front on the outskirts of Orjonikidze, Georgia was cut off from overland communication with Russia and was under threat of invasion from the north by way of the Caucasus passes. As in all non-Russian republics, because of Moscow's untimely policy of abolishing ethnic-territorial units in favour of mixed personnel, Georgia had lost its designated Red Army units in 1938, but three years later – 'given the difficulties of… training men who knew little Russian' – these were reinstated everywhere and Georgians again had 'their own' regiments and officers. Altogether, the number of citizens conscripted to the armed forces amounted to more than 16% of Georgia's population, and its total loss of population resulting from the war was about 9%. There were not only regular units, but also guerrilla bands, some of which were posted on the Turkish frontier, lest Turkey should exploit the situation and seize territory there. 'Others were sent to fight in the North Caucasus and in Crimea, where the losses were staggering; most of the 224th Georgian infantry division, for example, died in Crimea.'[37] It was Georgian troops who manned the Mamison and other high passes and prevented the Germans from crossing over from the north. Georgia was involved at sea too: cargo ships from Batumi and Poti faced many hazards during their frequent voyages taking supplies to Soviet garrisons on the Black Sea coast, such as Kerch, Gelenjik and Novorossiysk, ferrying troops to and from Ukraine and Crimea, providing transport for the troops besieged in Sevastopol and Odessa, or bringing evacuees and industrial equipment to Georgia. Georgia's contribution to the war against the German invaders included the conversion of engineering works to war production, and intensive development of agriculture to maintain food supplies – which relied largely on the labour of women and children.

Armenia's sacrifice for the war effort was similar: about 450,000 Armenians were called up for armed service. Armenian troops, like those of Georgia, were employed from 1942 in guarding the frontier with Turkey, and from 1943 Armenian divisions played a significant part in holding the Mozdok--Groznyy front against the Germans. They also distinguished themselves in the recovery of the Black Sea coast at Tuapse, Novorossiysk and Taman, and went on to fight at Stalingrad and in the subsequent advance through Ukraine and the liberation of eastern Europe. More than 70,000 Armenian soldiers were awarded medals for bravery, 103 of them receiving the highest order of Hero of the Soviet Union. Armenia also produced an unusually high number of army generals, many of whom commanded campaigns during the liberation of western regions of the USSR, including Hovhannes Baghramyan, who attained the supreme rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union. Armenia's industry was converted to armaments production, and the workforce was supplemented by women, who by 1945 formed 55% of industrial workers. In agriculture, too, ‘women and adolescents bore the whole burden of war-time production on their shoulders’. An important development, reflecting the strength of scientific research in Armenia, was the establishment in 1943 of its own branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences.[38]

Azerbaijan – as the USSR's principal source of oil, providing three-quarters of all its supplies and 90% of high-octane fuel for aircraft – made an enormous contribution to wartime supplies, as did its engineering works and factories, which were quickly adapted to producing firearms and ammunition of many types. Here, too, the depletion of the male workforce by conscription to the Soviet armed forces opened up employment and training to women, 70,000 of whom were rapidly deployed in all branches of industry, including oil-production, where they eventually formed 33% of all employees. In a Muslim country this was a social development of considerable importance. In Azerbaijan's agriculture, too, the role of women expanded, as the demand for grain and meat for the front increased. Azerbaijan's contribution of men for active service probably amounted to 500,000, of whom only 45,000 fought on the Caucasus front. Many gained distinction on the Moscow and Leningrad fronts, as well as at Stalingrad, where an outstandingly effective combination was formed by the tank regiment commanded by the Azerbaijani colonel Aziz Aslanov and the rifle regiment under the Georgian colonel M. Diasamidze.[39] One puzzling aspect of the Azerbaijanians' war record is that Soviet accounts published before 1987 suggested that, despite their prominent part in combat, Azerbaijani troops received few medals compared with other nationalities, and none became Heroes of the Soviet Union; a later history, however, states that 121 Azerbaijanis received this high decoration. Moreover, between 25,000 and 35,000 Azerbaijanis defected to the German side.[40]

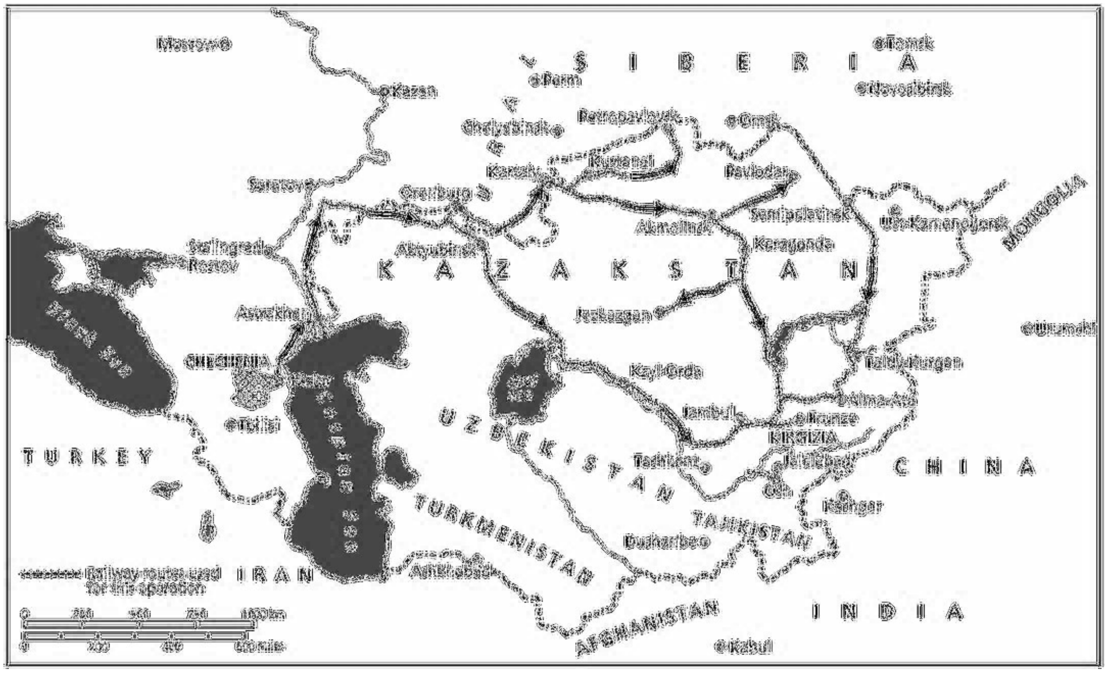
As Azerbaijan's oil and petrol were essential not only for the Caucasus front, but also for the whole Soviet Union's conduct of the war, Baku was of enormous importance as a hub of rail and marine transport on the Caspian. Merchant ships, escorted by the naval flotilla, brought supplies from Astrakhan to Makhachkala, Darband and Baku, but the impossibility of using the Volga north of Astrakhan while the siege of Stalingrad continued made the port of Krasnovodsk on the Caspian's eastern shore in Turkmenistan the only port linking the Caucasus with the rest of the USSR, where 'There was not a moment's respite as loading and unloading of ships went on day and night.' From there the Central Asian railway carried huge quantities of petrol, oil and military freight from the Caucasus destined for Soviet fronts in the west, as well as troops and evacuees, on the long journey via Tashkent and Kazakstan to Russia.[41] East of the Volga, along the border between Stalingrad and Saratov provinces and western Kazakstan, a railway carried essential supplies and reinforcements from central Russia via Saratov to the besieged city, its trains running the gauntlet of aerial attacks. To put western Kazakstan on a war footing, telephone communications with Astrakhan, Kuybyshev, Orenburg and other cities were improved by a new centre at Uralsk, and a naval base was established at Guryev for the Caspian and Volga flotilla.[42] Whole factories and industries along with their workers were moved by train from the western USSR to Kazakstan, where a great expansion of mining, oil-extraction, and iron and steel manufacturing took place, accompanied by the expansion of the railway network.[43] The new 338-km Astrakhan--Kizlar railway played a very important part, enabling North Caucasus to be supplied after the Germans cut the main Rostov--Groznyy line in 1942.[44]

The Soviet reconquest and deportation of North Caucasian peoples

Once the Soviet counterattack in the Caucasus started, North Osetia and Kabarda-Balkaria were cleared of Germans early in January 1943, although the Russian recapture of Cherkessk left German troops cut off in the mountains, where they resisted briefly. By 1 February Karachay, Circassia and Krasnodar province including Adygeya were liberated, apart from a small area in Taman peninsula, where the Germans held out until autumn 1943 before retreating across Kerch strait to Crimea.[45]

As we have seen, the Germans began recruiting and training non-Russian prisoners of war for ‘Eastern Legions’ in 1941, so that before the Caucasus campaign began they had thirty-six such battalions – about 36,000 men – in the field. Of these, 22,000 were from North Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The troops of the North Caucasus Legion were mainly Muslims – Adygeys, Circassians, Kabardans, Balkars, Nogays, Ingush, Chechens and North Osetians (Digors), as well as Abkhazians and peoples of Daghestan. It was not surprising that Caucasian prisoners of war seized the opportunity of joining the German army, since their mortality rate in the prison compounds was very high: of 150,000 Azerbaijani prisoners, 100,000 are said to have died of hunger and disease, and a German official put the death rate of ‘Turkic’ prisoners in general at 80%. By 1944 the Eastern Legions had grown to at least 170,000 men, including 9,000 from North Caucasus, 15,000 from Azerbaijan, 13,000 from Georgia and 12,000 from Armenia – a considerable force, trained and heavily armed.[46]

In order to defeat the Germans at Stalingrad and on the Caucasus front in 1943 and start their long, arduous recovery of territory to the west, the people of the Soviet Union had to make a huge effort, demanding the deployment of all available resources and manpower. Ironically, at that very same time the USSR's security forces began a series of massive deportation operations against whole communities of Soviet citizens – native North Caucasian peoples who were arbitrarily branded as ‘traitor nations’ (see Map 24). In November 1943 the government of the Soviet Union deported the whole Karachay people (69,000 persons: men, women and children)[47] from the Caucasus mountains to the arid plains of Kazakstan and Kyrghyzstan. These were followed by the Kalmyks (more than 93,000), and as this operation was completed the NKVD embarked upon a still bigger one – rounding up all the Chechens and Ingush in their own and neighbouring territories (478,479 people) and dispatching them to Kazakstan.[48] The last complete ethnic community to be thus exiled from North Caucasus were the Balkars (nearly 38,000) who in March 1944 were, like the Karachays, expelled from their homes and entrained, with very few possessions, for Central Asia. The total number of these five uprooted nations, all of whom had contributed substantial numbers of men to the Red Army, was almost 679,000.[49] It seems improbable that the Adygeys, the Circassians of Krasnodar province, were not involved in the deportation, but little is known about this.[50] Although the majority of Kabardans (c. 150,000) were left in their republic, in May 1944 some 1,700 of them were deported to Tajikistan.[51] Significantly, of the Osetians, the nation most loyal to Russia, the only victims of deportation were the Muslim Digors.[52] These actions, discussed and authorized at the highest level in Moscow by Stalin's Politburo, were organized by the head of the NKVD himself – Beria.[53]


Moscow
Kazan
Perm
SIBERIA
Tomsk
Novosibirsk
Chelyabinsk
Petropavlovsk
Omsk
Kurgan
Kartaly
Pavlodar
Saratov
Orenburg
Aktyubinsk
Akmolinsk
Semipalatinsk
Ust-Kamenogorsk
MONGOLIA
Stalingrad
Rostov
Karaganda
KAZAKSTAN
Astrakhan
Jezkazgan
Urumchi
Black Sea
CHECHENIA
Taldy-Kurgan
Kzyl-Orda
Alma-Ata
Tbilisi
Jambul
Frunze
KIRGIZIA
UZBEKISTAN
Tashkent
Jalalabad
CHINA
TURKEY
Osh
Kashgar
TURKMENISTAN
TADJIKISTAN
Dushanbe
Railway routes used for this operation
IRAN
Ashkhabad
0 250 500 750 1000km
0 200 400 600 miles
AFGHANISTAN
INDIA
Kabul

Map 24 Russia's deportation of the Chechen and Ingush peoples in 1943.

The biggest deportation – of whole nations who had not been under enemy occupation – was that of the Chechens and Ingush. In 1942–3 their homelands lay behind the Mozdok–Orjonikidze front, sealed off from the occupied territories of North Osetia, Kabarda-Balkaria, Karachay and Circassia. Since 1936 they had been combined into the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, but their resistance to Sovietization did not end with this administrative 'promotion' – nor did Moscow's desire to oppress them. One Chechen partisan leader, Saadullah Mahomayev, was active continuously from 1930 to 1944; another leading patriot, Hasan Israilov, was imprisoned throughout the late 1930s, when the impact of the Terror caused a new wave of anti-Russian activities by Chechen and Ingush guerrillas, including the derailment of a mainline train. When Israilov was released from prison in January 1940 he declared his intention of continuing the struggle for independence in the spirit of Finland's defiance of the USSR in the 1939–40 ‘winter war’. By February he had gained control of several districts and formed a ‘Chechen-Ingush People's Revolutionary Government’ in Galanchozh. Another Chechen partisan leader, Mairbek Sheripov, was active in Shatoy district, and in December 1941 the two merged their forces and, bringing the whole Chechen-Ingush mountain region under their control, they aimed to extend their influence eastwards into Daghestan and westwards into Osetia, Kabarda-Balkaria and Karachay. It was no doubt in response to this that Soviet Russian warplanes made two bombing raids on Chechen villages in March 1942.[54]

Thus the mountain regions of Ingushia, Chechenia and beyond were already in a state of turmoil before the German army arrived, although it is difficult to assess how widespread this was, as reports were probably exaggerated by the NKVD. According to Avtorkhanov, early in 1942 Beria chaired a meeting of all the republic's top officials, and announced that ‘if Soviet power is not restored in the mountain region…by next week, the whole Chechen-Ingush people will be expelled from the Caucasus forever’.[55] As the Germans approached the Terek in June, Israilov and Sheripov – in Soviet accounts simply ‘bandits’ – far from awaiting them with open arms, warned the population against welcoming them unless they committed themselves to Caucasian independence. On the other hand, as occupation became imminent, many local communist officials abandoned their posts and went into hiding.[56]

Meanwhile thousands of Ingush and Chechen men were fighting in the Red Army ‘in as great a percentage as any of the other peoples in our country’,[57] including several hundred among the sacrificial defenders of Brest fortress in June--July 1941. The USSR's abolition of ethnically based units in 1938 created linguistic and dietary difficulties which caused many non-Christian conscripts to desert, and the Chechens and Ingush found themselves excluded from military conscription. In 1942, however, as a result of representations by North Caucasian officers this law was changed. Several mobilizations of Chechens and Ingush for the front followed, but out of 45,000 drafted only 18,000 reported for duty. On the other hand volunteers were accepted, and in 1942 voluntary recruitment in the Chechen-Ingush Republic resulted in the formation of a cavalry regiment and an infantry division. These were deployed first on the Mozdok front, and later, as units fully integrated into the Red Army, they fought in campaigns from Ukraine to Germany. After the end of the war in the west, the infantry division was transferred to the Far East for the last stages of the war against Japan. A list of thirty-four Chechen-Ingush Republic soldiers who distinguished themselves in the war includes at least eighteen Muslim names, of whom four became Heroes of the Soviet Union. There was therefore no stain on the war record of the Ingush and Chechens.[58]

Despite this, Beria, on Stalin's authority, sent 1,000 NKVD soldiers to augment local troops for the expulsion of the Chechens and Ingush from their homes. After their operations against Volga German, Karachay and Kalmyk deportees, these were well-organized punitive troops and, as few men of military age remained in the villages, they encountered little resistance. Nevertheless there was brutality, particularly in the mountain village of Khaybakh, where 700 inhabitants were burned alive in a stable by an NKVD detachment commanded by a Georgian colonel. The latter's report to Beria was: ‘For your eyes only. In view of their untransportability and in order to carry out operation “Mountains” according to plan I was obliged to liquidate 700 inhabitants of Khaybakh hamlet. Col. of State Security

Gvishiani.’ He received the reply: ‘For decisive action during the deportation of the Chechens of Khaibakh district you have been recommended for a state award and promotion. Congratulations. Minister of Internal Affairs Beria.’ The ‘untransportables’ were old people, pregnant women, children and the sick. In addition to these, many other people in this and other mountain districts were shot.[59] Between 23 February and the beginning of March 1944, 387,229 Chechens and 91,250 Ingush were forcibly expelled from their homes in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and adjacent districts of Daghestan ASSR. One NKVD logistics officer proudly reported considerable economies in transport costs achieved by packing the victims into fewer trains and leaving all their baggage and household utensils behind; deaths on the journey to Kazakstan and Kyrghyzstan amounted to at least 50%.[60]

On 7 March 1944 the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was abolished, although no decree to this effect was made public until January 1946. Its territory was partitioned, most Ingush land being added to the North Osetian ASSR, while much of Chechenia came under a newly created Groznyy province and the rest was added to Daghestan and northern Georgia. In addition to the civilian population, all Karachay, Ingush and Chechen soldiers were removed from Red Army units – a total of 156,843 men and officers – and sent to the NKVD's prison settlements in Central Asia. Nor was this the final stage of the operation: early in 1945 all NKVD authorities in the Caucasus received orders to hunt down any remaining Chechens, Ingush, Karachays and Balkars and send them all to Central Asia. The total number of natives of North Caucasus deported from their homelands to alien surroundings in Central Asia or Siberia was more than 3.2 million.[61]

The reason given by the KPSS for the deportation of the North Caucasus peoples, the Crimeans and the Kalmyks was that they had collaborated with the Nazis during the occupation. This was true of some individuals, but it would only be from a twisted, Russo-centric viewpoint that this ‘treachery’ could outweigh the moral justification for their resort to collaboration with the Nazis in the hope that this would bring deliverance from the equally hideous communist régime. Even where desertion to the enemy did occur among some of these peoples (and many Russians), this would scarcely justify the mass exile of whole nations. As the distinguished Russian historian D. A. Volkogonov remarks, ‘Had [Stalin] followed this logic to its conclusion, after the formation of the Russian Liberation Army [Vlasov's ROA] he ought to have deported all the Russians and Ukrainians – in fact, all the nations of the USSR!’[62]

South Caucasia and Daghestan in the war

During the war, although no part of Georgia was occupied by the Germans, here, as everywhere in the USSR, the whole population was mobilized for the war effort; its industries had to be adapted to military production and forces mobilized to defend the mountain passes, and the casualties sustained by Georgian troops on various fronts were considerable.[63] However, Georgians were fighting not only against the German army, but also in its ranks. The Nazis had at first been doubtful about Georgians and, even more, Armenians as material for the Eastern Legions, but in summer 1942 Hitler's doubts were overcome, and both a Georgian and an Armenian Legion were formed. On the other hand, because of Hitler's shallow conviction of the reliably ‘warlike qualities’ of ‘pure’ Muslims and particularly ‘Turks’, the Azerbaijanis were the nation he most favoured for the formation of a Legion, which came into existence in 1941. Between 1942 and 1945 the total number of Azerbaijanis enrolled in German service was between 25,000 and 39,000 (in the Caucasus itself 6,000); Daghestan and North Caucasus provided 28,000 (in the Caucasus 2,820); Georgians c. 12,500 (in the Caucasus 3,900); and Armenians between 18,000 and 28,000 (in the Caucasus 1,900).[64]

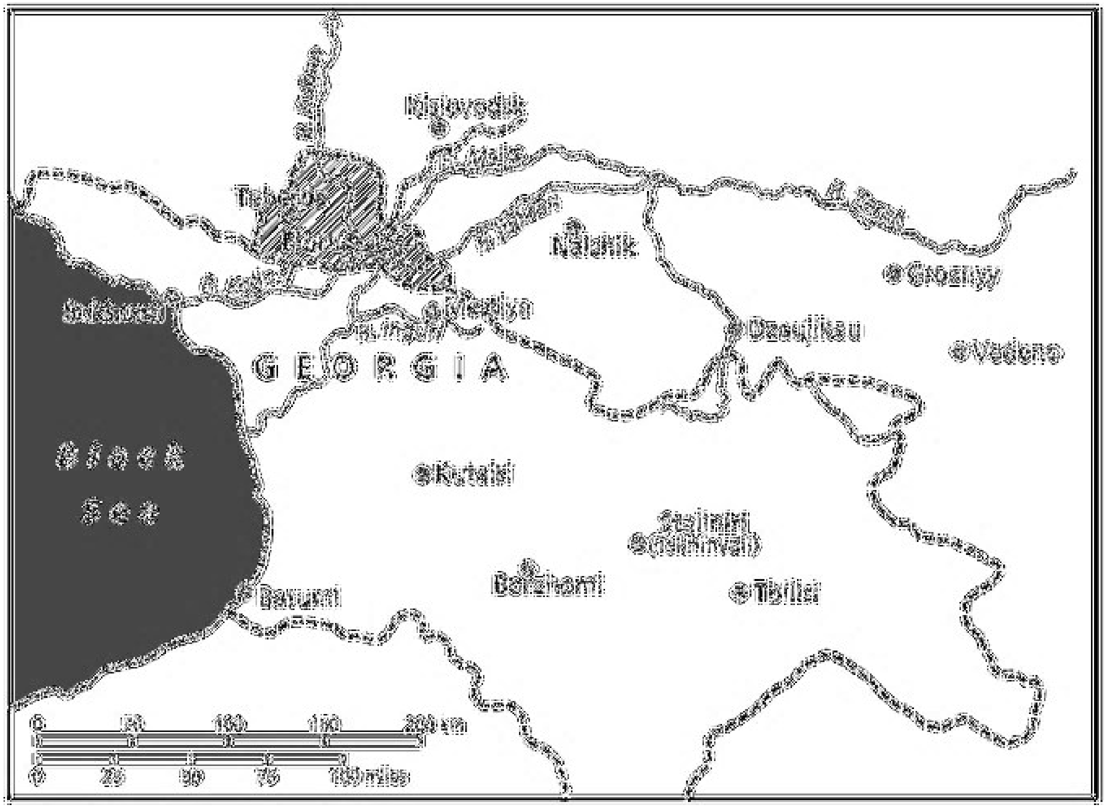
In the Caucasus campaign the Germans found the Azerbaijanis 'very keen for action…more lively and alert than other Russians [sic!]' and, along with the men from North Caucasus and Daghestan, the most reliable troops. The large number of German medals awarded to the Azerbaijanis 'shows that they must have performed valuable service'.[65] Logically, therefore, they too ought to have been deported in 1944!

While the North Caucasus native peoples from Chechenia westward suffered comprehensive deportation, people in Daghestan – who had never been under German occupation – were not entirely spared. In April 1944, for instance, 62,000 Laks, Dargans, Avars and other smaller nationalities were just as peremptorily uprooted from their homes in the mountains and forced to move to the now depopulated easternmost districts of Chechenia, which were allocated to Daghestan. Unused to the climate and terrain of these low-lying lands, thousands of the Daghestani deportees quickly succumbed to malaria. The most inhuman feature of their enforced resettlement, however, was the communist authorities' determination to prevent any possible return to the mountains by demolishing the Daghestanis' villages, arresting any inhabitants who attempted to reach them, and sending them back north. Pleased with the results, in terms of assimilating smaller ethnic groups to the Avars and Dargans, the Daghestan republic's government ordered further deportations in 1952 from Lezgi, Tabasaran, Rutul and Agul districts in the south-western mountains, mainly to the Darband coastal plain. This planned depopulation of Daghestan's mountain regions was just as ruthless as the other deportations, and once again the active role of the Georgian authorities in these arbitrary actions was shown by the expulsion to Daghestan in 1944 of 3,000 Avar and Ginukh residents of Georgia's Kvareli district, and their resettlement in former Chechen land.[66]

As Stalin and Beria's expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Caucasian people to Central Asia and Siberia, or from one part of Caucasus to another, was not motivated by their ‘treachery’, the most convincing explanation for their deportation seems to be purely local and anti-‘minority’: a desire to clear North Caucasus of nearly all its native peoples, especially Muslims, leaving only the ‘loyal’ Osetians and Kabardans in the west, and the Avars in Daghestan, and subjecting the region entirely to the Russians and the Georgians for the benefit of these two peoples. However, the collusion of the Azerbaijani KPSS leadership as well should not be overlooked. That the deportation of the Azerbaijanis was apparently out of the question was due, in the first place, to the importance of Baku's oil resources, but also, probably, to the implication of Azerbaijan's KP – led for thirty years by M. J. Baghyrov – claiming its share of power along with their Georgian and Russian colleagues. Continuing its occupation of the southern half of Lezgistan would be Azerbaijan's permanent share of the spoils, in reward for Russia's right to exploit Baku oil. In the light of such a scenario the wholesale deportation of North Caucasus and Daghestan mountain peoples might be revealed as a cynical piece of communist Russian-Georgian-Azerbaijani ethnic cleansing.

The Georgian NKVD played an important part in the deportation of the North Caucasus peoples, and close collaboration with Moscow's NKVD headquarters was axiomatic, since Beria was the head of the latter as well. Like the Osetians, Daghestanis and Russians living in the vicinity, Georgians were involved in blocking potential Chechen and Ingush escape routes over the mountains.[67] Nor was ‘ethnic cleansing’ restricted to North Caucasus. Once this had been emptied of most of its indigenous peoples, Beria turned his attention to South Caucasus, and particularly Georgia, where in November 1944, on the pretext of ‘improving the security of the USSR's frontiers’, the Muslims of south-east Georgia – allegedly smugglers open to recruitment by the Turkish secret service, and numbering about 95,000 – were also deported in their entirety. The victims included the Meskhetians or ‘Meskhi Turks’, the Khemshins (Armenian Muslim converts), the Kurds living in the Georgian republic and some Lazes. Like the deported peoples of North Caucasus, they were evicted from their homes and transported to Central Asia. The Laz were luckier than the rest since, having got there, they were soon brought back at Beria's behest to strengthen claims raised by the USSR in 1945 to former Armenian territory and Lazistan, now in Turkey.[68] The Meskhis, however, were actively prevented by the Georgian government from returning, even after their official ‘amnesty’ in 1957.[69] Another nationality subjected to several waves of deportation were Greeks. The first expulsion of c. 1,400 from Krasnodar and Rostov provinces took place in 1942; the second, of 8,300 ‘aliens lacking citizenship – Greeks’ in 1944, was augmented by the removal of 16,400 Greeks from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Deportation from the Caucasus (ostensibly strategic) continued in 1949, when more than 70,000 people of various nationalities, including 37,400 Greeks (among them recent refugees who had fled from the 1944–9 civil war in Greece), 15,500 Armenians and 1,800 Meskhis, were removed from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Krasnodar province.[70]

A striking feature of Beria's deportation operations which is seldom mentioned was the annexation to his Georgian satrapy of territory lying beyond its borders to the north – parts of the homelands of the Karachays, Balkars, Ingush and Chechens (see Map 25). Georgia's gains from the Karachay AP and the Kabarda-Balkar ASSR amounted to c. 1,900 square miles, embracing the source and upper valley of the Kuban and the highest and most spectacular mountain areas in the Caucasus, including Elbrus and Dombay. In addition to their symbolic significance as the centre of the Great Caucasus range, this gave Georgia a commanding stance over the north, with sport and commercial possibilities for tourism. As these areas were now practically devoid of their native population, Georgia proceeded to assimilate them by settling Georgians there. A further consequence of this expansion was that it increased Georgia's domination of Abkhazia, whose direct access to Circassia via the Klukhor pass was cut off. To the east, Georgia also annexed some 890 square miles of mountainous territory beyond the Darial gorge, formerly occupied by the Ingush Galgay and Kist tribes. Here too, in the upper valleys of the Argun and other Terek tributaries on the Chechen--Daghestani border Georgia gained a commanding position on the northern face of the mountains.[71]


Kislovodsk
R. Malka
Teberda
Nalchik
R. Terek
Groznyy
Sukhumi
Mestiya
Dzaudzhikau
Vedeno
GEORGIA
Black Sea
Kutaisi
Staliniri
(Tskhinvali)
Borzhomi
Batumi
Tbilisi
0
50
100
150
200 km
0
25
50
75
100 miles

Map 25 Territory of the Karachay Autonomous Region transferred to Georgia in 1944.

As if in justification of Georgia's emerging hegemony in the Caucasus, its historians at this time maximized historical evidence of medieval Georgia's influence over the North Caucasus peoples, from the Abkhazians in the west to the Chechens in the east. Thus N. A. Berdzenishvili 'emphasized that feudal Georgia drew the Caucasian mountain peoples into feudal relations', to which the 'backward' northeners succumbed; in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,

> Georgia was working towards the unification around it of the whole Caucasus, with…the Circassians, Osetians, Ingush and Chechens…participating in the formation of a unified great Caucasian feudal world…under the leadership of Georgia. By the end of Queen

> Tamar's reign all these North Caucasus peoples were vassals of the Georgian monarch, and experienced not only its political but also its cultural influence.

Other Georgian scholars asserted that the Christian churches found in many mountain areas were built by local rulers to demonstrate their adherence to the Georgian feudal community.[72]

The North Osetians' republic too was expanded at the expense of the deported Ingush and Chechens, gaining the Prigorodnyy (Russian for 'Suburban') district east of Vladikavkaz, as well as Malgobek and Mozdok on the Terek plain and much of Chechenia, renamed 'Groznyy province' of the Russian republic, including the oil city of Groznyy.[73] In contrast to Moscow's harsh treatment of most Caucasian nations, the Osetians were thus favoured as a people with a long tradition of loyalty to Russia. They also contributed particularly large numbers of senior officers to the Red Army during the war, as well as numerous Heroes of the Soviet Union. (As we have seen, Moscow did not recognize all Osetians as 'loyal', as it deported the Muslim Digors under the same conditions as the Ingush – although in fact many of Osetia's war heroes were Digors.) The resentment felt by the Muslim Ingush towards the Osetians was increased by the cession of Digor areas to North Osetia – especially as this had been organized by Stalin and Beria, both of whom were popularly believed to be not Georgians, but Osetians.[74]

The clearance of non-Georgian 'minorities' from north-western Caucasus would have been comprehensive if Beria's projected deportation of the Abkhazians too (c. 60,000 in

1945) had taken place. Although this was avoided, various strategies were adopted to undermine their position in their ASSR. One of these was the discontinuation of teaching in the native language in schools, and its replacement not by Russian, but by Georgian. The local Georgian-staffed KGB collected the names of all pupils and adults who objected to this, as if amassing evidence against ‘counter-revolutionary bourgeois nationalists’ and, although mass arrests and deportation did not occur, the threat hung over many scholars, in particular those at the Abkhazian Language, Literature and History Institute, for 40 years. Moreover, the Georgians’ aim of annexing Abkhazia completely was demonstrated by the settlement of tens of thousands of Megrelians in villages specially constructed for them in Abkhazia in 1945–6. (Holiday homes could also be obtained by trusted citizens of other republics.) This was accompanied by continual discrimination against Abkhazians in what was their ancient homeland and was still ‘their’ republic. In addition, the authorities gradually Georgianized Abkhazian place-names, for instance by replacing the Abkhaz form ‘Sukhum’ (regularly used in Russian before the revolution) with the Georgian ‘Sokhumi’ and Russian ‘Sukhumi’.[75]

Georgia's role in the ‘Great Fatherland War’ deportations was quite prominent, as was Beria's role in the USSR – because of his closeness to Stalin – but particularly in the Caucasus, which was notoriously ‘Beria's private fiefdom’. Certainly the last decade of Stalin's life coincided with the aggrandizement of Georgia. It is improbable that the deportation of peoples from the Caucasus was conceived in order to ‘punish’ them, since their alleged treachery was neither proven, nor unique to them, nor such as to justify the victimization of whole nations. Nor does the strategic consideration of Turkey's possible military alliance with Germany, or Russia's designs on Turkey after the war, carry much weight.[76] It is, however, significant that, apart from the Greeks and Kalmyks, all the peoples deported from Crimea, North Caucasus and Georgia were Muslims. In view of the Georgian SSR's discrimination against the main ‘minority’ peoples in the republic – Abkhazians, Osetians, Achars and Meskhis – it seems clear that the reason for these actions was ‘ethnic cleansing’ with the aim of an ethnically homogeneous, Christian Georgia, and the annexation of depopulated parts of Karachay, Balkaria, Osetia and Ingushia represented another aspect of this Georgian imperialist project.

The attitude of the German occupiers is relevant here. While von Schulenburg's idea that all the Caucasian peoples had to be offered some form of independent statehood prevailed in the army command, despite Rosenberg's disapproval, the latter's racist view of the Georgians had been influenced by a Georgian émigré, Alexander Nikuradze,[77] who persuaded him that the Georgians were ‘Aryans’ and therefore a ‘superior people’. Thus Rosenberg proposed that the Caucasus under its German overlords should be a confederation dominated by the Georgians.[78] These racist views, shared by the small band of Georgia's ‘Promethean’ exiles in Berlin, must have been known in Georgia. In summer 1941 Beria had a meeting with Stalin and V. Molotov at which they discussed the option of surrendering to Hitler and trading territory for peace.[79] Whenever the outcome of the war hung in the balance, Beria would certainly have combined these two ideas into a contingency plan for himself if the Soviet Union were to be defeated.

Another relevant question is to what extent Stalin was a Georgian patriot. His daughter Svetlana's view was that he was ‘completely Russified’ and loved Russia; in a family where ‘things Georgian were not nurtured’ but where Georgia, nevertheless, was felt to be ‘a living motherland’, Stalin himself was the least enthusiastic about his native land.[80] Svetlana quotes her brother Vasiliy's words: ‘You know, father used to be a Georgian.’[81] Among numerous anecdotes in the same vein which circulated, it was reported that at the 1945 victory reception in the Kremlin, ‘Field Marshal Rybalko said, “What a wonderful toast you proposed to the Russian people! How can you, as a Georgian, understand the Russian people so deeply?” Stalin replied angrily: “I am not a Georgian. I am a Russian of Georgian extraction.” And Rybalko fell into disfavour.’[82] Stalin's origins were obscure, as his biographers have found,[83] and it has been said that

> [he] was a rootless, or uprooted man, to whom his origins meant little…whose record did not satisfy his wishes and had to be heavily rewritten. For he was also afflicted with a marked insecurity…always highly sensitive to affronts to his dignity, and concerned to project the image of one far above ordinary humanity. The two attitudes conflict; but both carry a feeling of uncertainty, even unreality.

Conquest's analysis of Stalin's early life concludes: ‘Thus Stalin either loved or hated his mother, and either admired or hated his father!’[84] It is reasonable to suppose that his feelings for Georgia, too, were similarly contradictory. It was the opinion of the Polish prime minister, W. Sikorski, that ‘Stalin hated the Russians, yet he was a Russian nationalist in so far as he wanted to be the Russian emperor.’[85] Also relevant are the thoughts attributed to Stalin by the documentary novelist Anatoliy Rybakov: ‘He had to *declare* relentless war on Great Russian chauvinism, because it evoked the response of local nationalism. But not for a minute must he forget that the main unifying force was the Russian people. To the Russian people he must be a Russian, just as for the French the Corsican Napoleon Buonaparte was a Frenchman.’[86]

Among the many reasons to reject Stalin's claim not to be a Georgian is the fact that ‘he spoke Georgian with exceptional purity’, whereas he never felt secure when speaking Russian, and never lost his strong Georgian accent. Born into a poor family where no language other than Georgian was spoken, he began to learn Russian at school at the age of eight, but it is improbable that, as he later asserted, he could have forgotten Georgian.[87] His daughter recalled that Stalin liked her mother to dance the Lezginka, that he liked to play gramophone records of Georgian folk music and, having ‘an excellent ear and a clear tenor voice’, he would sing at his typically Caucasian repasts when he and his guests would sit at table for hours, discussing and arguing loudly,[88] proposing toasts and singing Georgian and Russian songs.[89] Moreover, like any patriotic Georgian, Stalin knew Rustaveli's *Man in Tiger-skin* – so much that he had the author of a new Russian translation of it released from prison in 1937, in order to discuss the text with him.[90] In fact, Stalin's only negative feeling towards Georgians was his professed dislike of their effusiveness and the ‘feudal honours’ and lavish gifts with which they welcomed him when he went to Georgia or he received them in Moscow.[91]

Lev Trotskiy went so far as to say that the transfer of land in Georgia to private possession in the 1920s was secretly organized by Stalin to favour the peasants of his native land – because of ‘his old agrarian roots and his…deep-seated Georgian nationalism’.[92] Another biographer, emphasizing Stalin's Georgian serf origin, attributes to him a deep sense of social inferiority which paradoxically made him ‘treat with sceptical distrust not only the oppressors, the landlords, the capitalists, [etc.]…but also the oppressed, the workers and…peasants whose cause he had embraced’.[93] Even if it was ‘hatred of the possessing and ruling classes’ that moved him, rather than sympathy with the peasant class, it seems clear that, for all his adulation of the Russian people, it was still with Georgian ‘proletarians’, including Beria, that he felt most at home. This perhaps explains the paranoia of Stalin's last years, when he began to fear Georgians and other Caucasians. The seeds of this would certainly have been nurtured by popular outrage against the violence that Stalin initiated in Georgia from 1921 onwards. In the 1930s one of his compatriots confided to Avtorkhanov that Stalin's crony, Orjonikidze,

> is a real Caucasian and fears nobody. When he comes to Tbilisi he walks about…without a bodyguard and you can go up to him and ask for a cigarette from Moscow – and he'll give you one. But we only hear that Stalin has been in Tbilisi after he's back in Moscow. Stalin is a hero in the Kremlin, but a woman whenever he leaves it. That's why he closed the Kremlin, closed the USSR, and wants to close the whole world…It makes you ashamed that he's a Georgian.

Stalin distrusted his compatriots, had them followed in Moscow and placed spies in Georgian restaurants, because he believed that, if he was ever assasinated, the killers would be Caucasians.[94]

It is possible that the cult of Stalin grew out of the cult of Russia which he initiated in the 1930s. Russia's Communist Party was ethnically very mixed, with many Poles, Jews, Latvians and others. Ideologically this conformed with internationalism, M. N. Pokrovskiy's presentation of history in terms of faceless historical masses, and K. Marx's historical abstractions. In 1930s Europe, however, amid rising floods of fascist nationalism the rejection of the ‘great men’ and ‘great nations’ of history left the USSR looking historically insipid. The KPSS needed to generate patriotism, and this inevitably had to be focussed on the heroes of the majority Russian nation. However, Stalin's restoration of Russian history and national heroes also demanded a living Leader, a *Führer* or *Duce*. As Russia's current leader – a Georgian and the son of a shoemaker-serf – was inadequate for this role, Stalin had to turn himself into a Russian to lead the Russian people and its empire. He became the incarnation of ‘great Russia’, distancing himself from the masses behind the false, avuncular image of a stern but sometimes affable father of the ‘Soviet people’, whereas in fact he could only be what he innately was – a Georgian. This pretence was supported by Beria, the only Georgian that Stalin could talk to with relative freedom after Orjoniḳidze's death in February 1937 – a suicide which proceeded from one of Orjoniḳidze's ‘human weakness[es], which sooner or later was bound to lead to a confrontation between him and Stalin: he was absolutely devoid of Stalin's gift of harbouring grudges and taking revenge’. As Orjoniḳidze had spared repentant ‘oppositionists’ and harboured them in his industrial ministry, it was easy for Stalin to trap his old comrade as a ‘saboteur’ and destroy him through his family. Stalin entrusted Beria with this task – thus putting out of the way ‘the only man in the Central Committee who…would have dared to come out openly against [Stalin's] plan for the “Great Purge”’.[95] Beria had no such quixotism: moving easily between his Moscow tasks and his seat of unlimited power in Transcaucasia, he carried out a ruthless purge of the KP and NKVD in Georgia during the summer of 1937; then in autumn, along with G. Malenkov and Mikoyan, turned his attention to Armenia and Azerbaijan – where Baghyrov alone survived and flourished as the provincial headman thanks to his association with Beria.[96]

Although Georgia was Stalin's and Beria's homeland, this did not mean that they were any less vicious in implementing Terror there. From late 1935 Beria directed attacks on writers in Armenia (A. Bakunts, E. Charents and others) and Georgia (including T. Tabidze and P. Iashvili), while Baghyrov conducted the murder campaign in Azerbaijan. In 1936 the Armenian KP secretary Khanjyan died in Tbilisi – probably shot by Beria himself – and later many communists became victims of a campaign against ‘Zinovyev--Trotskiyist groups’ allegedly discovered in Baku, Yerevan and Tbilisi.[97] In fact, ‘The toll [of Terror victims] in Georgia and Transcaucasia was extraordinarily high’, and (typically) after the total elimination of the region's first communists ‘a new group of party functionaries even more loyal to Stalin and Beria took [their] place’.[98] Meanwhile the paltry ‘events’ of KPSS state ritual continued: in 1936 the Georgian republic ‘was awarded its first Order of Lenin’ for ‘achievements in the building of socialism’; the ‘Transcaucasian Federation’ was redivided into its three separate republics; and, according to a 1968 history textbook, although ‘In Georgia…infringements of socialist legality were particularly disastrous…because at that time the man occupying the top post was enemy of the people Beria, who with his accomplices destroyed many honest KP and Soviet workers, scholars and artists',[99] Beria himself survived with his position even stronger than before. In January 1938 he installed his client Bakradze as head of the Georgian government, and later Beria was moved from Transcaucasia to Moscow as head of the USSR NKVD in place of the executed Yezhov. This offered further scope to his ambition to attain supreme power, which he had nurtured since his appointment as head of the OGPU in Georgia. In Moscow he set about placing the Georgian cronies he brought with him, while maintaining his influence in Tbilisi by leaving K. Charkviani as his successor there.[100]

Beria's main qualification for success was that he was 'absolutely immoral' – a ruthless intriguer and flatterer, sadistic interrogator, cold executioner and shameless ravager of young women. However, as Volkogonov remarks, Beria was also 'absolutely apolitical': he had not read or understood either Marx or Lenin and, although this was not a primary qualification for his main activities, he may have remained somewhat unaware of his disadvantage in political plotting against ideologically adept communists.[101] Nevertheless, from 1938 to 1953 Beria was the most powerful man in the USSR after Stalin. He became an acknowledged member of the dictator's political circle and a constant guest at his late suppers, but he enjoyed a unique familiarity with Stalin, seeing him every day and being, right up to Stalin's death, the only person authorized to enter the dictator's rooms without being summoned. Beria's most regular function was to bring Stalin reports and lists of 'spies' and 'terrorists' for arrest and interrogation in every region of the USSR – all of which Stalin signed with little or no attention to individual cases. He also played on Stalin's growing paranoia by reporting on his personal security staff and from time to time ‘discovering’ spies and terrorists among them.[102]

Such were the two Georgians who shaped life in the USSR for thirty years. By the mid 1930s Stalin's megalomania had free rein and his power was virtually unbounded, since the KPSS accepted his personal directives as decrees requiring no formal approval by the Central Committee. His only counsellors were selected cronies invited to his nocturnal dinners, where ‘Affairs of the party and state and military matters would be discussed and Stalin would sum up. Malenkov…would record the discussion as Politburo minutes. Arguments did not arise. The comrades tried their best to guess Stalin's opinion in advance and say yes in good time’, and he occasionally mocked and confused his obsequious courtiers in order to demonstrate his unlimited power over them. He thrived on flattery – at which Beria excelled – and ‘His papers contain ample evidence that he believed himself immortalized in the people's minds.’ This absence of self-criticism was shown in such episodes as Stalin's self-praise concerning the notorious *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course* (1938), which was written, at least in part, by himself; and his active part in composing the words of the ‘Hymn of the Soviet Union’, the new national anthem which replaced the un-nationalistic ‘Internationale’ in 1943.[103] It was also Stalin himself who in 1951 wrote the resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers decreeing the erection near Stalingrad of a colossal statue of himself, for which 33 tons of bronze was to be smelted, at a time when the local population was still living in mud huts thrown up after the war.[104] Another telling expression of the mutually nourishing megalomania of Stalin and sycophancy of Beria was the creation around the

Jughashvilis’ little house in Gori of the marble Stalin Museum, which Beria conceived and Stalin approved.[105]

By the 1930s the average cultural and moral calibre of Stalin's close associates in governing the USSR was so low that Beria was no worse and indeed, amid this mediocrity, may have seemed relatively outstanding. In connection with the USSR's military collapse at the beginning of Germany's war against the USSR it has been pointed out that ‘In any other country, the leader responsible for these fiascos and disasters would have lost power. But such had been Stalin's thoroughness that no alternative leader of real credibility remained alive. Those now trying to handle matters [Stalin's Politburo]…had long been little more than puppets.’[106]

Beria's ascent in the Soviet hierarchy continued during the war. Reproached by Stalin in 1940 for his delay in having Trotskiy murdered in Mexico, Beria succeeded in achieving the assassination on 21 August, and was quickly rewarded by promotion to General Commissar of State Security and a Deputy Chairmanship in the government, while retaining his post of NKVD Commissar.[107] At Stalin's gatherings in summer 1941 Beria dutifully ordered the ‘liquidation’ of Soviet spies who had sent unwelcome, but valid, warnings of Hitler's preparations, and continued to reassure Stalin that Hitler was not going to attack. Even Red Army generals, with the exception of G. Zhukov, were afraid to voice their apprehension about the German invasion, just as later, when Beria visited the war fronts and interfered inexpertly in campaign plans, no general dared to criticize him. His interference on the Caucasus front was particularly troublesome, but his recommendation that I. Maslennikov receive the command there was later rewarded by the general's effusive praise of Beria's ostensible contribution to the success of military operations. Various sycophantic ‘Songs about Lenin’ and ‘Songs about Stalin’ had entered the Russian concert repertoire, and now a ‘Song about Beria’ (‘May our defender Beria thrive for many years’) rang out in Georgia.[108] One report makes it clear that in his role as dictator of the Caucasus front Beria was directly responsible for the mass deportation of the North Caucasus peoples. In February 1944 he swore at the top officials of the Kabarda-Balkar ASSR in the coarsest terms, cursing the republic for ‘surrendering Mount Elbrus to the Germans’; for this, he said, the Kabarda-Balkar population would be deported.[109] When the war ended, Stalin's victory awards included Beria's inappropriate elevation to Marshal of the Soviet Union and, on Beria's recommendation, the promotion of seven of his subordinates in the NKVD and KGB to the rank of colonel-general.[110]

After his translation to Moscow Beria ensured the preservation of his ‘Transcaucasian’ power base by shifting his supporters between posts there and in the central NKVD, and his special interest in Georgia was unquestioned.[111] A new responsibility fell to him in 1945 after the USA used the atomic bomb against Japan: Stalin put Beria in charge of the materials and personnel procurement side of Soviet nuclear research, in order to accelerate its progress. This required finding some 37,000 workers and preparing many ‘special sites’, i.e. setting up laboratories in concentration camps, where scientists would work as prisoners. In December 1946 Beria reported their first chain reaction, and a bomb was tested in 1949.[112] It was suspected in the West, however, that his political power had been reduced, as he lost his central NKVD and KGB posts, perhaps because of Stalin's paranoia and self-isolation.[113]

In 1951–2 confused events occurred in Georgia which were symptomatic of the murky atmosphere surrounding Stalin and Beria. Georgia had long been treated as a single homogeneous country, but the old antagonism between Kartli-Kakheti on the one hand, and Megrelia with other west Georgian regions on the other, still existed. In November 1951 the Georgian Central Committee accused the second secretary, justice minister, prosecutor and head of Georgia's Komsomol of corruption and belonging to a nationalist organization. Their names – Baramia, Rapava, Shonia and Zodelava – were all, like Beria's, Megrelian,[114] and this contorted case (apparently inspired by Stalin) was a kind of anti-Megrelian purge in which many Megrelian officials were arrested and interrogated – the reason, according to Georgia's First Secretary V. Mgeladze, being that they 'were seeking to divide Georgia and exercise chieftainship over separate provinces'. As Beria had indeed placed Megrelian cronies in various offices in the Georgian SSR it seemed likely that he was the main target.[115] Yet Beria kept his privileged position in Stalin's household, and in October 1952, when Stalin reduced the size of the Politburo, Beria was still included in this inner circle, while in Georgia '[Beria's] name was still attached to myriad public places and enterprises…[and] he continued to enjoy a real cult of personality…in his native republic.'[116]

The comment of one seasoned chronicler – 'the circumstances of political events in the Soviet Union are, from the point of view of a traditional sober-minded researcher, vulgar and sensational'[117] – was confirmed at the time of Stalin's death on 5 March 1953. As the Leader lay dying, Beria is said to have behaved 'like the crown prince of a vast empire with the power of life or death over all its citizens. For him, Stalin was already in the past.'[118] Beria could scarcely conceal his excitement at the prospect of his imminent elevation to the throne,[119] and perhaps it was only because he did not enjoy trust or influence among senior army officers that he did not immediately attempt a coup d'état in Moscow.[120] Nevertheless 'the streets of Moscow were solid with MVD [secret police] troops when Stalin's death was announced', indicating that Beria had already regained control of the police ministries in preparation for his triumph.[121] On the next day government responsibilities were shared out, with Malenkov as chairman of the Council of Ministers, Beria one of its four vice-chairmen, and the Ministry of State Security and MVD merged into a single Ministry of Internal Affairs headed by Beria, who thus appeared to have emerged with his powers confirmed and extended. As one of the ruling triumvirate with Malenkov and Molotov, Beria won temporary popularity with the intelligentsia by repudiating the notorious 'Jewish Doctors' Plot' case, and with the non-Russian SSRs by seeming to promise them greater autonomy and less Russification.[122]

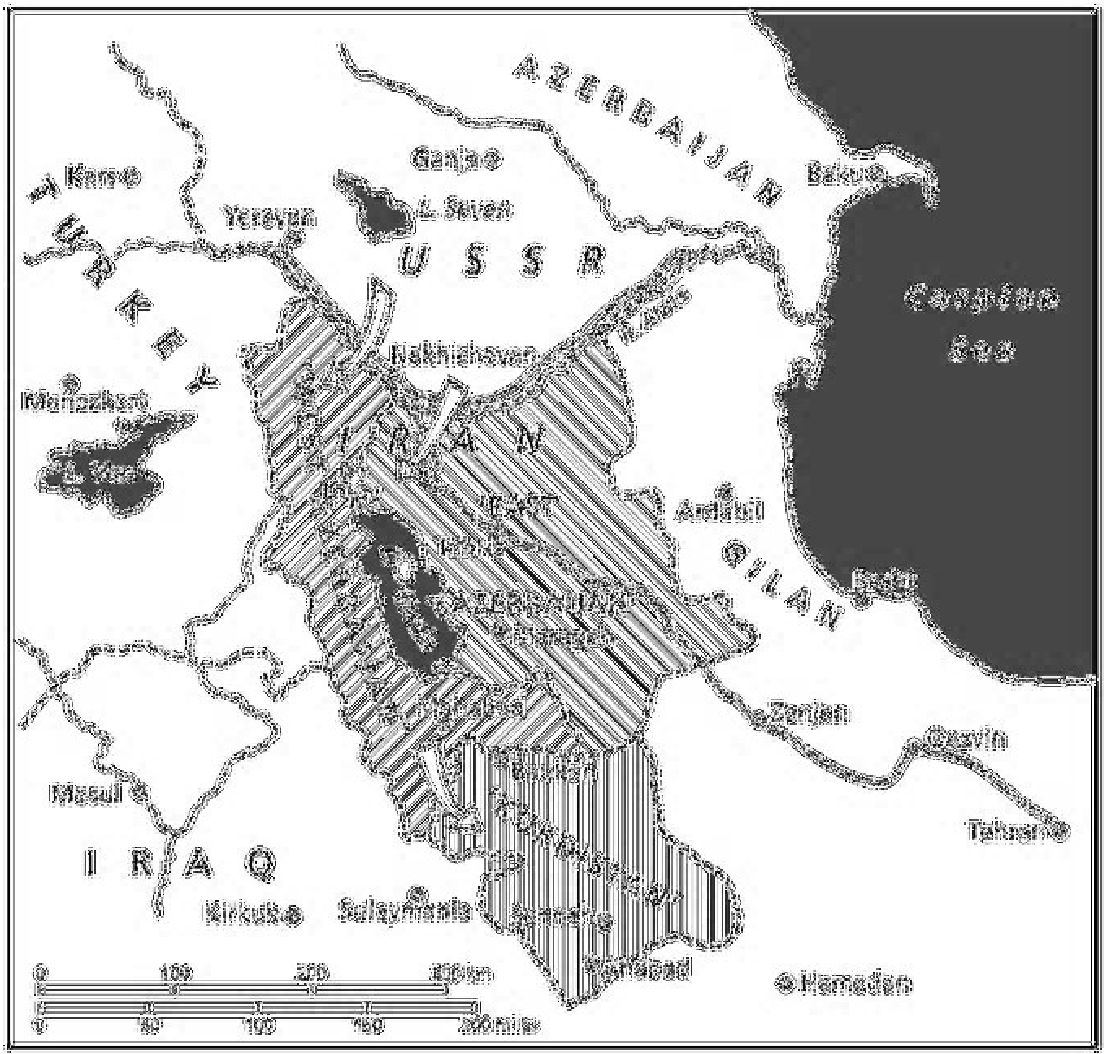
Beria's triumph also extended to Tbilisi, where in April what amounted to a coup occurred. Mgeladze was removed, a new bureau appointed in which the number of Megrelians almost equalled that of Kartvelians; Baramia, Zodelava and Rapava (the senior Megrelian officials removed in 1951–2) were reinstated, and there was a new government headed by Bakradze, whose praise of Beria as 'the best son of Georgia, talented pupil of Lenin, comrade-in-arms of Stalin and outstanding worker of the Communist Party and the great Soviet state' was greeted with 'loud and long applause'.[123]

However, Beria's success was short-lived. On 26 June 1953 in Moscow he was deposed and arrested at a combined meeting of the KPSS Presidium, the Council of Ministers and Soviet army chiefs, in a coup which was not announced publicly until 10 July. This was immediately followed by another coup in Tbilisi, where Beria's accomplices in the Georgian MVD were arrested, and Bakradze publicly condemned him – before being ousted himself and replaced as first secretary by V. Mzhavanadze. The fact that one place in the Georgian KP Bureau was thereafter permanently allotted to the Soviet Army's Commander of the Transcaucasian Military District indicates the distrust of Georgia harboured in Moscow for the next 40 years. The final act of Beria's career was his trial in December 1953 by court martial, which sentenced him to be shot (although he may well have been already dead by then).[124]

The apparent ease with which Beria was deprived of his power bases in Moscow and Tbilisi, and the facts that the KPSS leaders, headed by Khrushchov, refused to submit to him and that the army provided loyal troops to disarm him, showed that his grip was weaker than had been believed, and it had been a delusion to think that Georgia, even in combination with other SSRs under nationalist politicians with whom Beria had curried favour, could have had sufficient force to subject the whole USSR, if that was indeed Beria's dream.

Soviet post-war expansionism: Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan

Shortly after the end of the Second World War international peace in the Caucasus and the Middle East was potentially threatened when it seemed that, just as Beria's Georgia had been ‘rewarded’ with more territory for its services to Stalinism, Baku--Azerbaijan too was to have its territory augmented by Russia's annexation to it of Iran's province of Tabriz, or ‘Persian Azerbaijan’ (see Map 26). This situation had arisen indirectly from Germany's invasion of the USSR in June 1941: at that time Germans had a high profile in Iran, whose government had since 1926 contracted with German firms for the development of air transport, shipping, road-building, heavy industry and other sectors of Iran's modernizing economy. Of particular importance to Germany's enemies during the war was the trans-Iranian railway from Abadan on the Persian Gulf to Tehran, which had been planned by the Germans but was built in 1926–38 by Swedish and other engineers.[125] Britain and Russia were also still deeply involved in Iran, and ‘initially the Russo-British concern was to facilitate, with American technical assistance, the transit of urgently needed war supplies to the Soviet Union, beleaguered by the armies of Hitler’ – although later ‘the Soviets attempted to profit from the occupation by closing their zone to free entry and beginning its “sovietization”’.[126] Meanwhile, as allies against Nazi Germany, they could not tolerate coexistence there with their common enemy. As Reza Shah simply professed neutrality and refused to expel the Germans, the two old imperialist competitors on the Persian scene presented him with an ultimatum and, when he did not comply, on 29 September 1941 invaded and occupied their former spheres of influence in Iran, whereupon the shah abdicated and was shipped abroad by the Royal Navy.[127]


AZERBAIJAN
Baku
Ganja
Kars
Yerevan
L. Sevan
U S S R
TURKEY
Caspian Sea
Nakhichevan
Manzikert
L. Van
I R A N
EAST
AZERBAIJAN
Ardabil
GILAN
Zanjan
Qazvin
Tehran
Mosul
I R A Q
Kirkuk
Sulaymania
KURDISTAN
Hamadan
0
100
200
300 km
0
50
100
150
200 miles

Map 26 Russia's attempt in May 1945 to annex Iranian (southern) Azerbaijan to 'Soviet Azerbaijan' as well as forming a communist régime in Iranian Kurdistan, south of Lake Urmia. Reluctantly, under a previous international agreement between Iran, the USA, the UK and the USSR, the Soviets and Allied forces left Iran in March 1946.

Thus throughout the Second World War the Russians occupied all of north-west Persia, from Lake Urmia to northern Khorasan and as far south as Yazd, while the British held a smaller area in the south, from Bandar Abbas to the Afghan border, reaching India in the east; in between was a strip of independent Iranian territory lying to the north of the Persian Gulf, including Khuzistan and Fars. The Iranian army was thrown into disarray by the crude haste of the Russian invasion, which brought 40,000 troops into the country within a month, beginning a five-year occupation which culminated in ‘the most crucial period in Azerbaijan's modern history’.[128] A significant political development within Iran during the war was the formation in 1941 of the ‘People's party’, Tudah, which included members of the Democratic and Nationalist parties, but whose ‘organizing core…[consisted of] young, educated Communists’ fostered by Moscow. After Russia's victory at Stalingrad in February 1943 this ‘became the increasingly one-sided pro-Russian Party’ in Tehran, and it also commanded considerable support in Tabriz.[129] By autumn 1945 the issue of the Azerbaijani Turkish language, and the underrepresentation of Azerbaijan in Iranian politics, stirred the ambitions of several politicians in Tehran, the most influential of whom was Mir Ja^{c}far Pishavari, the doyen of Tabriz left-wing politics and a committed Marxist-Leninist. Russia's communists, with their base in Baku-Azerbaijan, were losing no opportunities to bring Persian Azerbaijan under Moscow's influence. In Tabriz this succeeded in boosting a narrow Azerbaijanism at the expense of all-Iranian patriotism, for instance, in a set of six Azerbaijani school texts, *Language of the Motherland* (*Vatan dili*), in which, although there is much about the history and culture of Azerbaijan, no reference whatever is made to Iran's history or its social and cultural ties with Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, under the auspices of the USSR state publishers, propagandist newspapers in Azerbaijani were issued in Tabriz and Tehran from 1941 onward.[130]

Moscow also brought influence to bear on Turkey from 1944 onward by reopening the old question of which countries' warships should have the right to pass from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, and revoking the 1925 Soviet--Turkish treaty of friendship and neutrality. In the Caucasus, Russia once again laid claim to the formerly Armenian provinces of Kars and Ardahan, and renewed Georgia's claim to the Black Sea coastal province of Lazistan, which was under Turkish rule.[131] Moreover, even before Persian Azerbaijan's declaration of autonomous statehood in December 1945, Russia's machinations had extended to Azerbaijan's western neighbours, the Kurds of Persia's mountainous districts on the Turkish and Iraqi border to the west and south of Lake Urmia, whom they incited in August 1945 to form a 'Democratic Party of Kurdistan' and declare their autonomy as 'the Kurdistan Republic', with Mahabad as its capital, under the leadership of the Kurdish chief Mulla Barzani.[132]

'Autonomous Kurdistan' sent a delegate to Tabriz in September 1945 for the celebration of the union of the Iranian Tudeh Party with the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijanis of Tabriz did not particularly welcome this new rival to the possession of what had been their province of Tabriz, but with Soviet 'mediation' the two breakaway communities were persuaded to negotiate, and resolved to avoid any attempt by Tehran to 'divide and rule' by collaborating closely in further negotiations with the capital, which would be led by the prime minister, Mir Ja^{c}far Pishavari.[133]

The situation in 'autonomous' Azerbaijan and Kurdistan was a serious matter for all of its neighbours, as their continuing existence and Sovietization would have driven a wedge some 300 miles long, inhabited by 6 million mainly Turcophone and Turcophile people,[134] between western Iran and the rest of the country. It would also have brought the effective frontier of this new USSR satellite very close to the oilfields of Iraq and Iran, with acute strategic consequences.

In May 1945 the end of the war in Europe focussed attention upon the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran. The presence on Iranian soil of Soviet Russian (as of British) troops was subject to the Iranian--Soviet treaty of 1921, whereby no armed force of any third state was permitted to have a base against Russia in Iran, and to a tripartite alliance signed in January 1942, which specified that British and Soviet forces were to leave Iran within 6 months of the end of hostilities. This was reinforced at an Allied Foreign Ministers' Conference in September 1945 which set a final date for withdrawal in March 1946; however, while the British removed their troops, the USSR did not and indeed brought in reinforcements and prevented Iranian troops from reaching garrisons in Tabriz--Azerbaijan – tantamount to a Soviet invasion of Iran. Only after January 1946, when Iran had complained to the recently established United Nations Organization, did the Soviet Union finally sign an agreement with Iran on 4 April, according to which Soviet troops were to be evacuated in return for Iran's granting the Russians an oil concession. The USSR complied, but never got its oil concession, having been out manoeuvred by the Iranian prime minister, Aḥmad Qavam.[135]

The USSR's breakaway puppet states of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan continued to exist until December 1946, when they were suppressed violently by Muhammad Riza Shah, and their leaders fled – Pishavari to Moscow, and Mulla Barzani to Iraq, where he was prominent in Kurdish rebellions in the 1950s and 1960s. 'Few understood, then or later, what Qavām had achieved. Āẓarbāijān is the sole example of a territory passing to the Soviets during the Cold War, and being then restored…his handling of the Āẓarbāijān crisis, with its implicit threat to the nation's integrity, marks him out as perhaps the one constructive Iranian statesman of the twentieth century.'[136]

[1] V. P. Ostrovskiy, *et al.*, *Istoriya Otechestva 1939–1991: uchebnik dlya odinnadtsatogo klassa sredney shkoly*, Moscow, 1992, pp. 12–16: this outline of the disastrous military situation in a school textbook is even more damning than many of those published in the West. See also Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 390–402.

[2] Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, pp. 206–7.

[3] J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, London, 1975, pp. 120–2; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 178.

[4] A. Dallin, *German Rule in Russia 1941–1945: a Study of Occupation Policies*, London, 1957, pp. 69, 409, 414–15; A. V. Kuznetsov, *Babiy Yar: roman-dokument*, Frankfurt am Main, 1970, p. 195; Ponomarev, ed., *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. X, pp. 228–9.

[5] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 642–4; A. Bullock, *Hitler: a Study in Tyranny*, revised edn, Harmondsworth, 1952, p. 79; N. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: the Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion'*, London, 1967, pp. 112, 127–9, 141, 167; Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 111, 117–18, 258 n. 2; G. Fischer, ed., *Russian Émigré Politics*, 2nd limited edn, New York, 1951; W. Laqueur, *Russia and Germany a Century of Conflict*, London, 1965, pp. 51–3, 83–7, 90–2, 109–17, 122–5; J. Toland, *Adolf*

Hitler, New York, 1976, pp. 136–7; Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta*, pp. 321, 595 n. 4.

[6] R. Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology*, London, 1972, pp. 164–5, 677; Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 8–9, 68–70; A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Munich, 1933, p. 742; G. Paul, *Grundzüge der Rassen- und Raumgeschichte des deutschen Volkes*, 4th edn, Munich and Berlin, 1943, pp. 162, 170, 181, 213–14, 225.

[7] S. Horak, *Poland and Her National Minorities*, New York, 1961, p. 162.

[8] The NKVD reported that during 1941–3 there were in the USSR 1,210,224 deserters from the Red Army and 456,667 refusing to serve – a total of 1.7 million men: Bugay and Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 15–16.

[9] C. Andreyev, *Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement: Soviet Reality and Emigré Theories*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 29–36, 46–7, 52–5, 60–3, 216–23; Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 527–32, 535; C. C. Jurado and K. Lyles, *Foreign Volunteers of the Wehrmacht 1941–1945*, London, 1983, pp. 13–16, 20, 23–4, 26–9; B. Nikolayevskiy, ‘Porazhenchestvo 1941–1945 godov i general A. A. Vlasov (materialy dlya istorii)’, *Novyy zhurnal*, 1948, vol. 18, pp. 209–34; vol. 19, pp. 211–47; Rauch, *History*, pp. 343–7.

[10] Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 270–3; J. Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen 1941–1943: Turkotataren, Kaukasier und Wolgafinnen im deutschen Heer*, Freiburg, 1976, pp. 39–50.

[11] Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 298–9, 301; Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 332.

[12] P. Krasnov, *The Unforgiven*, London, 1928, pp. 39, 59–60, 92, 96, 98, 107, 425, 440, etc.

[13] Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 329, 332.

[14] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, vol. I, p. 566; vol. II, p. 13; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 329–30. Because of their obsolescence in modern warfare, most Soviet cavalry units were disbanded from 1942 onwards.

[15] Dallin, *German Rule*, p. 299; Jurado and Lyles, *Foreign Volunteers*, pp. 13, 16, 18–19, 21–5, 30, 34–5, 37, colour pl. D; Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta*, pp. 51–2, 293–4.

[16] Longworth, *Cossacks*, p. 331; Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, vol. III, pp. 25, 29–30.

[17] Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 239–44, 247, 299–301, 351.

[18] *Ibid*., pp. 300–1; Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 333–6; Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta*, pp. 50–1, 189–90, 206–7, 280–1, 284, 324, 490–1, etc.

[19] Longworth, *Cossacks*, pp. 336–7; Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, vol. I, pp. 259–60; Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta*, pp. 28–9, 91–4, 122–3, 158, 191, 194–203, 234, 282–4, 367–76, 514–16.

[20] Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 9, 15–16; *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941–1945*, edited by P. N. Pospelov, *et al.*, 6 vols., Moscow, 1960–5, vol. II, map opposite p. 456; V. Ubushayev, *Kalmyki: vyseleniye i vozvrashcheniye 1943–1957 gg.*, Elista, 1991, pp. 33, 49; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 68–9; Westwood, *Russian Railways*, pp. 242–5, 283, 303.

[21] Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 40–3, 104; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 36–7, 70–1, 75.

[22] D. A. Chugayev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], *Epokha sotsializma*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 106–7, 118–25, 152–85, 198–203.

[23] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', p. 34; Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 18–25, 28–9, 56–7, 77–81; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 67–9, 72–5.

[24] Chugayev, *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], p. 303; Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 78, 80, 83–6, 112–16, 118–23, 135–6, 142–3, 148–9, 153–4, 161–2; *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny*, vol. III, map opp. p. 84; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 73, 76–8; Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta*, pp. 54–61, 315, 381.

[25] Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 84, 87–90; *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny*, vol. II, map opp. p. 456; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 78–81; Ubushayev, *Kalmyki*, pp. 8–9, 46–7.

[26] Ubushayev, *Kalmyki*, pp. 6–7.

[27] *Ibid*., pp. 5–6, 8–10, 27–8, 51, 88–90.

[28] Chugayev, *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 317–18, 329, 332; Zemskov, 'Spetsposelentsy', pp. 8, 10–13.

[29] Arbakov, 'Kalmyks', pp. 34–5; Chugayev, *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, [vol. II], pp. 352–3, 360; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 80–1, 83, 84; Ubushayev, *Kalmyki*, pp. 28–37, 44, 47–8, 50–8, 62–7, 89–90.

[30] *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. III, pp. 227–30; *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 321–3; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, vol. II, pp. 285–93; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 239–53, map of military operations 1942–3.

[31] *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 322–3; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, vol. II, pp. 286–7; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 39–42, 61–2, 68–9, 71–3; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 253–6.

[32] R. Conquest, *The Nation Killers*, London, 1970, p. 77; Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 235–8, 248–9; *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny*, vol. II, pp. 459–60, map opp. p. 456; vol. III, pp. 88, 94–5, map opp. p. 84.

[33] Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 237–9.

[34] *Ibid*., pp. 245–8; Hoffmann, *Deutsche und Kalmyken*, pp. 74–6 and n. 197; J. Hoffmann, *Kaukasien 1942/43: das deutsche Heer und die Orientvölker der Sowjetunion*,

Freiburg, 1991, pp. 191, 335–6; Hoffmann, *Ostlegionen*, pp. 51–2.

[35] *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 224, 233–4, 240–53, 260–9.

[36] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 346.

[37] Suny, *Making*, p. 283.

[38] Hoffmann, *Kaukasien*, p. 423; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 347–56.

[39] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 152–3; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaidzhana*, pp. 176–80; Altstadt *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 154–5.

[40] Hoffmann, *Kaukasien*, p. 220.

[41] *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny*, vol. II, p. 461; P. Skosyrev, *Soviet Turkmenistan*, Moscow, 1956, p. 32.

[42] *Istoriya Kazakhstana*, p. 328.

[43] A. N. Nusupbekov, *Voprosy istorii Kazakhstana (Izbrannye trudy)*, Alma-Ata, 1989, pp. 132–6.

[44] *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny*, vol. II, pp. 456–9; Westwood, *Russian Railways*, p. 245.

[45] *Istoriya Kabardy*, p. 324; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, vol. II, p. 294; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 256–9.

[46] Hoffmann, *Ostlegionen*, pp. 12, 33, 38–9, 62–3, 76, 81–2, 171–3.

[47] The precise numbers of Karachays quoted by the NKVD as deported from their homeland and reaching their destinations in Central Asia alive were: (a) departed 68,938, (b) arrived 64,624, (b) as a percentage of (a) 93.7%: N. F. Bugay, ‘V bessrochnuyu ssylku: tayny “osoboy papki Stalina”: kak vyselyali narody’, *Moskovskiye novosti*, no. 41, 14 October 1990, p. 11; Zemskov, ‘Spetsposelentsy’, p. 8, adjusted in proportion to the 5% general error mentioned there.

[48] Chechens: 387,229 deported – c. 342,655 arrived (88.5%); Ingush – 91,250 deported – c. 126,909 arrived: sources as in note 34, but the NKVD letter quoted there is clearly provisional, and 91,250 as the number of Ingush deported according to N. F. Bugay, ‘Varvarskaya aktsiya: dokumenty publikuyutsya vpervye’, in *Otechestvo: krayevedcheskiy almanakh*, Moscow, 1992, p. 65, is clearly incompatible with Zemskov's number of arrivals.

[49] Including, for example, 16,000 Balkars, or one-third of Balkaria's population: Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Kabardino-Balkarii*, 1994, vol. II, pp. 17, 293. The total number of Chechen, Ingush, Kalmyk and Karachay deportees (exclusive of Balkars) reported to Stalin by Beria was 650,000: Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 445.

[50] Personal evidence of this from an Adygey is cited in Wixman, *Language Aspects*, p. 133, n. 2.

[51] N. F. Bugay, 'Deportatsionnye protsessy na Kubani i ikh posledstviya', in Bugay and Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, p. 164; V. N. Zemskov, [answer to reader's letter], *Argumenty i fakty*, 30 September--6 October 1989, p. 8 (translated in *CDSP*, 1989, vol. 41, no. 48, p. 14).

[52] Wixman, *Language Aspects*, p. 133, n. 2.

[53] Bugay, 'Deportatsionnye protsessy', pp. 163, 164, 167; N. F. Bugay, 'K voprosu o deportatsii narodov SSSR v 30–40-kh godakh', *Istoriya SSSR*, 1989, no. 6, pp. 135–44; Bugay, 'Varvarskaya aktsiya', pp. 53–4, 60–6; Bugay, 'V bessrochnuyu ssylku'; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 36–7, 42, 57–60, 62–4, 78–9, 82–3, 108–9, 114–16.

[54] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 600–2, 619, 623; Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, pp. 173, 175, 181–4; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 52–4.

[55] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 609, 619–22; Bugay, Kudyukina and Khlynina, 'Natsionalnye problemy', pp. 14–16.

[56] Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and Ingush', p. 183; Bugay, Kudyukina and Khlynina, 'Natsionalnye problemy', pp. 16–17.

[57] Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, p. 93.

[58] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 147, 180, 186; Bugay, Kudyukina and Khlynina, ‘Natsionalnye problemy’, pp. 14–15; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 56–7; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 224, 246–50.

[59] C. Gall and T. de Waal, *Chechnya: a Small Victorious War*, London, 1997, pp. 64–70; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 20; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 58–9; I. Prelovskaya, ‘NKVD troops’ crimes in exiling the Chechens and Ingush in the winter of 1944: new documents’, *Izvestiya*, 12 March 1992, in *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 12, pp. 17–18; Usmanov, *Nepokoryonnaya Chechnya*, p. 93.

[60] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 184–6; Bugay, ‘Varvarskaya aktsiya’, pp. 64–6; Bugay, ‘V bessrochnuyu ssylku’; Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 58–64; Zemskov, ‘Spetsposelentsy’, p. 10.

[61] N. F. Bugay, ‘Pravda o deportatsii chechenskogo i ingushskogo narodov’, *Voprosy istorii*, 1990, no. 7, pp. 41–2, 44; Bugay, ‘Varvarskaya aktsiya’, pp. 69–72; M. R.-A. Ibrahimov, ‘Narody Dagestana v XX v. (etnodemograficheskiye problemy)’, in *Rasy i narody: yezhegodnik*, 21, Moscow, 1991, p. 115.

[62] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 445.

[63] Suny, *Making*, p. 283.

[64] Hoffmann, *Ostlegionen*, pp. 24–5, 31, 33, 38–9, 172.

[65] Hoffmann, *Kaukasien*, pp. 184, 234–5.

[66] V. Dzidzoyev and A. Kadilayev, ‘Minnye polya perestroyki i natsionalnoye vozrozhdeniye narodov’, *Nash Dagestan*, 1993, no. 165/6, p. 20; Ibrahimov, ‘Narody Dagestana’, pp. 109, 114–16.

[67] Bugay, ‘Deportatsionnye protsessy’, pp. 171, 173; Bugay, ‘V bessrochnuyu ssylku’.

[68] Suny, *Making*, pp. 284–5.

[69] Akhaltaksi, ‘Report from Georgia: on the Meskhetians’, pp. 303–4.

[70] Bugay, ‘Deportatsionnye protsessy’, pp. 164–5, 170, 171–9; Bugay, ‘V bessrochnuyu ssylku’; Bugay, ‘Varvarskaya aktsiya’, p. 68; Zemskov, [answer to reader's letter].

[71] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953–5, vol. I, p. 484.

[72] Togoshvili, ‘Voprosy’, p. 37.

[73] Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VIII, map opp. p. 630.

[74] Knight, *Beria*, p. 14; J. Ormrod, ‘North Caucasus: fragmentation or federation’, in I. Bremmer and R. Taras, eds., *Nation and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 460; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 304–13. ‘It was common for Georgians anxious for the reputation of their country to maintain that [Stalin's] grandfather was not a Georgian…but an Ossetian immigrant who changed his name from Dzhugayev…Georgians in any case found the idea…convincing. Ossetians had a reputation

in tsarist times for providing the toughest police cadres. And Stalin's temperament seemed too dour for a Georgian': Conquest, *Stalin*, p. 3.

[75] R. Clogg, ed. and transl., 'Documents from the KGB archive in Sukhum: Abkhazia in the Stalin years', *Central Asian Survey*, 1995, 14, 1, pp. 155–89; B. G. Hewitt, ed. and transl., 'Appendix to "Documents from the KGB archive in Sukhum: Abkhazia in the Stalin years"', *Central Asian Survey*, 1996, 15, 2, pp. 259–66; Suny, *Making*, p. 289.

[76] Wixman, *Language Aspects*, pp. 132–4.

[77] Alexander Nikuradze is identified with A. Sanders in Hoffmann, *Kaukasien*, pp. 256 n. 7, 522.

[78] Cecil, *Myth*, pp. 163–4, 192; Dallin, *German Rule*, pp. 228–31, 237.

[79] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 412–13.

[80] S. Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem k drugu*, London, 1967, pp. 35, 69.

[81] *Ibid*., p. 35.

[82] Yu. Borev, *Kratkiy kurs istorii XX veka v anekdotakh, chastushkakh, baykakh, memuarakh po chuzhim vospominaniyam, legendakh, predaniyakh i t.d.*, Moscow, 1995, p. 228.

[83] I. Deutscher, *Stalin: a Political Biography*, revised edn, Harmondsworth, 1966, pp. 21–4; L. Trotsky, *Stalin: an Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, New York, 1941, pp. 3–6; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 5–6.

[84] Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. xvii, 5, 11.

[85] Borev, *Kratkiy kurs*, p. 229.

[86] A. Rybakov, *Deti Arbata: roman*, Moscow, 1987, p. 193.

[87] Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. 1, 2.

[88] His daughter also mentions Stalin's predilection for Georgian food and ‘light, fragrant Georgian wine’: Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem*, pp. 17, 35, 37, 72, 109, 129.

[89] Borev, *Kratkiy kurs*, p. 121.

[90] The translation was passed for publication and its author, Shalva Nutsubidze, was saved and survived until 1969: Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. 18, 187, 209; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 916; L. Trotsky, *Stalin: an Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, New York, 1941, p. 16.

[91] Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem*, pp. 69, 192–3.

[92] Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 397, quoted in Suny, *Making*, pp. 229, 362 n. 3, 364 n. 55.

[93] Deutscher, *Stalin*, pp. 21, 43–4.

[94] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 132–4, 306–8.

[95] *Ibid*., pp. 454–8; see also Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, pp. 230–1; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 281–2.

[96] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 142–6; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 50, 64–5, 85; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 130–2; Suny, *Making*, pp. 275–7.

[97] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 141–50; Brzezinski, *Permanent Purge*, pp. 184–5; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 78–86; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 130–2, 155–62; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 156–7; Suny, *Making*, pp. 272–4, 276–8.

[98] Suny, *Making*, pp. 276–7, 279–80; cf. Matossian, *Impact*, p. 151.

[99] *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. III, pp. 127–8.

[100] Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem*, pp. 13, 59; Suny, *Making*, pp. 262–3, 276–80; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 331–5.

[101] Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem*, pp. 136–7; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 333–4.

[102] Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem*, p. 136; Conquest, *Stalin*, p. 216; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 219–20, 310–11, 318, 550.

[103] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 219–24.

[104] N. S. Khrushchov, *Doklad na zakrytom zasedanii XX S"yezda KPSS: o kulte lichnosti i yego posledstviyakh*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 48–52 – known in English as his 'Secret Speech'.

[105] Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem*, pp. 193–4; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pl. 27.

[106] Conquest, *Stalin*, p. 238.

[107] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 378–83.

[108] Knight, *Beria*, p. 142.

[109] Bugay, 'K voprosu o deportatsii', p. 139.

[110] Conquest, *Stalin*, p. 234; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 334, 397–402, 472, 479–80, 550. Beria was also made a Hero of Soviet Labour 'for his achievements in producing armaments' – that is, his use of slave labour in the NKVD concentration camps for war production: Suny, *Making*, p. 285; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 532–3.

[111] R. Conquest, *Power and Policy in the USSR: the Study of Soviet Dynastics*, London, 1961, p. 136.

[112] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 334, 498, 531–3.

[113] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 87–8, 152; Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. 274, 305; Suny, *Making*, pp. 284–6.

[114] The endings -ia, -ava, -aya and -ua are typical of Megrelian surnames, whereas Kartli-Kakhetian surnames end in -shvili, -dze, -eli, -ani, etc.: Unbegaun, *Russian Surnames*, pp. 382–5.

[115] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 130–3, 137–44, 153; Conquest, *Stalin*, p. 306; Fairbanks, 'Clientelism', pp. 352–60; *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. III, pp. 274–5; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 159–64; Suny, *Making*, pp. 286–7. See also Khrushchov, *Doklad*, pp. 42–3.

[116] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 143–5; Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. 206, 308–11; Knight, *Beria*, p. 159; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 569–77.

[117] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, p. 8.

[118] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 573–4.

[119] Alliluyeva, *Dvadtsat pisem*, pp. 12–14; Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. 311–12.

[120] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 333, 472.

[121] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 200–1; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 183–4.

[122] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 195–6; Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti*, pp. 513–18; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 184–91; V. P. Naumov, 'Byl li zagovor Berii? Novye dokumenty o sobytiyakh 1953 g.', *Novaya i noveyshaya istoriya*, 1998, no. 5, pp. 17–39; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 574–5.

[123] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 136–7, 145, 150; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 186–8.

[124] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 146–8, 150, 217–20, 222–3, 226–7, 440–7; Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti*, p. 523; J. Keep, *Last of the Empires: a History of the Soviet Union 1945–1991*, Oxford, 1996, p. 44; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 194–200, 213–15; Naumov, ‘Byl li zagovor Berii?’, pp. 33–7; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 131; Volkogonov, *Stalin*, pp. 332–3, 576–7.

[125] Hambly, ‘The Pahlavī autocracy: Rizā Shāh’, pp. 229–30, 241–2.

[126] Saikal, ‘Iranian foreign policy’, p. 436.

[127] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 65, 85–8; Hambly, ‘The Pahlavī autocracy: Rizā Shāh’, pp. 240–2.

[128] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 85, 211 n. 78; F. Kazemzadeh, ‘Iranian relations with Russia and the Soviet Union, to 1921’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, map p. 344; Saikal, ‘Iranian foreign policy’, pp. 435–7.

[129] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 66–7, 72, 75–6; G. R. G. Hambly, ‘The Pahlavī autocracy: Muhammad Riżā Shāh, 1941–1979’, in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, p. 246.

[130] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 89, 166–7. Presumably these would have been printed in Persian-Arabic script, which was still used by Tabriz--Azerbaijanis in 1945 (see a page of portrait photographs of members of a Democratic Party

plenum in Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, opp. p. 111); none of the sources referred to here mentions that in Russian Azerbaijan this alphabet had been abolished in 1929 and replaced with the 'revolutionary' Latin alphabet until 1940 – only a year before the first issue of the newspaper *Azerbaijan* came out in Iran – when it in turn was abolished in favour of Russian Cyrillic. While the Russian alphabet was familiar in Baku, it was less so in Tabriz.

[131] M. E. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War: a History to 1995*, 2nd edn, Harlow, 1996, pp. 394–5.

[132] Hambly, 'The Pahlavi autocracy: Muhammad Rizā Shāh', p. 245; see map in Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, p. 128.

[133] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 152–4; Hambly, 'The Pahlavī autocracy: Rizā Shāh', pp. 245–9.

[134] Approximately 2.9 million in Soviet Azerbaijan and 3.2 million in Iranian Azerbaijan: N. Z. Hajjiev [in Russian 'Gadzhiyev'], 'Azerbaydzhanskiy yazyk', in *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. II, *Tyurkskiye yazyki*, p. 66.

[135] Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp. 69–72, 112; R. Ferrier, 'The Iranian oil industry', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, pp. 652–4; Kazemzadeh, 'Iranian relations with Russia', pp. 344–9; Keddie and Amanat, 'Iran under the later Qajars', p. 210; Saikal, 'Iranian foreign policy', pp. 436–9; Yapp, *Near East*, pp. 395–6.

[136] Hambly, 'The Pahlavi autocracy: Muhammad Rizā Shāh', pp. 248–51.

15 Caucasia from Stalin's death to the 1980s (1)

Russia's Iron Curtain in the south

In 1953 the USSR's Caucasus territories formed three large regions. The northern plains and uplands south of the Don and Volga comprised the provinces of Rostov, Astrakhan, Krasnodar, Stavropol and Groznyy, which fell within the borders of the ‘Russian’ (Rossiyskaya) Republic, and were considered by Russians to be ‘Russian provinces’. South of these, in the foothills and gorges rising towards the Great Caucasus, lay ‘autonomous’ lands belonging to the non-Russian indigenous peoples, of whom only the Circassians, Kabardans, Osetians and Daghestanis still occupied their own territories, while the Karachays, Balkars, Ingush and Chechens, having been deported in 1943–4, now lived in *permanent* exile in Central Asia, Kazakstan and Siberia. The third region, lying beyond the mountains in what the Russians call ‘Transcaucasia’, consisted of the three union republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan (incorporating Armenian Highland Karabagh) and Georgia (including the ethnic territories of Acharia, Abkhazia and South Osetia). Until the 1960s the Caucasus was linked to Russia mainly by the railway from Rostov-on-Don running via Chechenia and Daghestan to Azerbaijan and from there into Georgia, but thereafter Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan became linked with Moscow by jet-plane routes. The mountainous areas on both flanks of the Great Caucasus remained remote, inaccessible, somewhat wild, and dependent for contacts across the range on very few passes, which were blocked for most of the winter. All areas were under the surveillance of Russia's secret police, the MVD and KGB, especially in ‘Transcaucasia’ with its international frontiers with Turkey and Iran. In the eyes of imperial Moscow the Caucasian native peoples were not entirely ‘reliable’, so they were heavily guarded against trouble from without and within by Red Army garrisons and detachments of frontier troops, which by the 1980s totalled about 300,000 men, half of them in Georgia – making the Caucasus ‘one of the most heavily militarized areas in the USSR’.[1]

After 1953, relaxation of the Stalin–Beria tyranny was felt very directly in the ‘Transcaucasian’ republics, where not only spontaneous national movements but also some Soviet officials began to show a desire for greater autonomy – challenging Moscow's determination to maintain tight control by imposing a common policy over the whole region. After Beria's underlings had been dismissed, KPSS First Secretary Khrushchov (1953–64) revived Stalin's attempt to integrate Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan into a single political and economic entity under a ‘Transcaucasian’ Bureau of the KPSS. This lasted until 1964, when L. Brezhnev reversed all of Khrushchov's policies (which had encouraged greater local autonomy, allowing the KP leaders of each republic to consolidate their own positions). Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia had been particularly successful in one respect: these were the only union republics in which the native languages were designated in their constitutions as official state languages, and those of Georgia and Armenia uniquely retained their own distinct alphabets.[2]

International relations around the Caucasus became less tense when after Stalin's death the USSR withdrew its claims (advanced in 1945 ostensibly by Georgia and Armenia) to the Lazistan and Kars districts of Turkey, with their formerly Georgian and Armenian populations,[3] and in 1946 Moscow had abandoned Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, with their bogus communist régimes.[4]

The ideological crisis throughout the USSR created in 1956 by Khrushchov's admission of Stalin's crimes was nowhere felt so intensely as in Georgia, where many people took the denunciation as an insult to their nation. The Georgian KP's determination to foster the nationalistic repudiation of Stalin's guilt was illustrated in Georgian books as late as 1968, where the communist tyranny under Stalin's rule and Khrushchov's ‘Secret Speech’ were referred to only in the vaguest terms. Statues and portraits of Stalin remained on view in Georgia (and neighbouring North Osetia) for several decades, and the Georgian KP secretary appointed after Stalin's death, Vasiliy Mzhavanadze, maintained a rather Stalinist régime until 1972.[5]

In Armenia there was no regret when adulation of Stalin ended. After the deposal of G. Harutyunyan and most of the Armenian Central Committee in 1953, new heads of the KP followed in quick succession, while the Armenian people concerned themselves with continuing problems of survival as a nation.[6] Nevertheless Armenia's KP leaders preserved their privileged position through maintaining ‘a tightly woven network of friends, colleagues [and]…relatives…[guaranteeing] loyalty to Moscow and protection of one another’.[7]

The Stalin–Beria past was less easily shrugged off in Azerbaijan, whose KP dictator M. Baghyrov had been Beria's close collaborator. In 1953 Baghyrov was deposed and arrested, and his successor, I. Mustafayev, made a sudden switch from sycophancy to disparagement, particularly at a ‘scholarly session’ of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, where Baghyrov's ‘vicious little book’ on the history of the Azerbaijan KP (emulating Beria's effort as a historian) was unanimously condemned. In 1956 Baghyrov was put on trial on charges of ‘terrorism’ and ‘creating a counter-revolutionary organization’, as well as supporting the Stalin cult, and he was shot along with several colleagues. Three years later Mustafayev himself was dismissed, and Väli Akhundov became Azerbaijan's first secretary until 1969, when the redoubtable Heydar Aliyev became the ruler of Azerbaijan.[8]

Economy and environment

Azerbaijan's Caspian oilfield remained the major economic resource in the Caucasus, and – although rivalled since the 1940s by the Volga–Ural region – was still of enormous importance to the USSR's economy. Khrushchov, who favoured economic decentralization, created an Oil Industry Ministry in Baku, where in 1947 a new industrial town had been built at Sumgayt, to produce synthetic rubber and aluminium. However, Azerbaijan's agriculture was in a poor state, and insufficient urban housing was built, so that Sumgayt – notorious as a ‘big slum’ – witnessed serious riots, as did Baku in 1965. By then Azerbaijan's prosperity was being challenged by western Siberia, where the first oil from a vast new field began to flow in 1964. Its production soon exceeded that of the Caspian, where oil wells were beginning to dry up because of obsolete technology. Thus Baku, despite the exceptional quality of its petroleum, lost its monopoly and generous state investment. (Incidentally, the antagonism between Azerbaijan and Armenia was intensified by the fact that in the competition for oil industry funding, the main proponent of Siberian development was the Armenian economist Abel Aghanbegyan.) When Heydar Aliyev[9] became the KP first secretary in Azerbaijan in 1969, acute social and economic problems existed and, despite his promise to regenerate industry and agriculture, discontent was rife. By 1981, however, Azerbaijan's industrial production had the fastest growth rate in the USSR, and Aliyev asserted that flourishing cotton, grape and wheat production had solved the republic's economic problems. Meat and dairy produce, however, remained scarce, and rationing became necessary in 1984. To mitigate these shortages Azerbaijan bartered its industrial production for grain, butter and textiles from other republics; but the republic's credit dwindled with the decline in its oil and gas production, which now represented only 2% of the USSR total.[10]

In Georgia economic development after 1953 continued to be described in fulsome terms, each five-year plan reportedly a success, with production greatly exceeding that of the previous period. This constant rise, accompanied by increases in the percentage of the population living and working in towns rather than in agriculture, was presented as further progress towards the ultimate goal of a communist society.[11] In 1959–66, for instance, Georgia's transformation continued:

> 139 new industrial enterprises came into production…[including] the central finishing factory of the Cḥiatura Manganese Trust…the second Khrami hydroelectric station and the Cḥiatura [manganese] enrichment plant…the Rustavi synthetic-fibre works…[M]ain pipelines were laid to bring natural gas to Georgia from Azerbaijan and Krasnodar…permitting enterprises to convert to gas-burning.[12]

Some of these were war-time projects: the steelworks at Rustavi were begun in 1944 and produced their first steel in 1950, using ore from Azerbaijan and coal from western Georgia and Abkhazia. It can be assumed that the labour for Rustavi's construction was provided by Beria's concentration-camp prisoners. The same applies to the new Black Sea coast railway opened in 1945 to link Samtredia in western Georgia with Tuapse and Krasnodar, considerably shortening the journey from Tbilisi to Moscow. Another project in western Georgia in the early 1950s – the drainage of the malarial swamps between Poti in Guria and Ochamchire in Abkhazia for tea and citrus fruit cultivation – was also a task for which GULag prisoners would have been used. By the late 1960s Georgia's industry was highly developed, as its eastern Georgian engineering works at Rustavi and Tbilisi were joined by western Georgia's manganese mines and metallurgical plants at Cḥiatura and Zestafoni, and the many factories of Ṭqibuli–Kutaisi region, including the Orjoniḳidze automobile works.[13]

Georgia was envied by Russians because it enjoyed a higher standard of living than most SSRs, with an exceptionally generous provision of doctors, a ‘supply of useful living space per urban resident plac[ing] Georgia third in the USSR’, and private bank accounts which were exceeded only in Estonia and Armenia. Moreover, Georgia ranked first in terms of access to secondary and higher education. Less creditable from the communist standpoint was the fact that ‘private ownership has become widespread in the republic…[including] the illegal construction of *dacha*s and individual homes’.[14] It was also obvious to visitors that there were far more private cars in Tbilisi than in any Russian city. These benefits arose from Khrushchov's decentralization:

> In Georgia the long tenure of Mzhavanadze aided the establishment of entrenched local authorities who developed their own ethnic political base from which they could ‘negotiate’ with central authorities…Many industrial firms in Georgia were transferred from all-union ministries to the republic's control; by 1958, 98% of industrial output in Georgia was produced by enterprises under the republic's management…the Georgian party elite increased its hold over political, economic and cultural institutions…and, while ruling in Moscow's name, actually offered a low-level resistance to policies from the center that attempted to drive the Georgians too fast in economic development or cultural assimilation.[15]

On the other hand, the low level of military industry in Georgia deprived it of a stake in Soviet arms production and reduced the possibility of military self-assertion vis-à-vis the Russian metropolis.[16]

Agriculture in Georgia is at a disadvantage because there is little arable land but much mountainous terrain, giving little scope for mechanization, while, apart from the western coastal plain, much of its farmland requires irrigation. The land it possesses, however, is extremely valuable, since the climate makes it unique in the USSR as a region where grapes, lemons, mandarins, tea and other subtropical plants can be grown.[17] The high commercial value of such commodities encouraged private enterprise: in 1975, ‘Small garden plots…produce[d] about 40% of Georgia's $1.2 billion agricultural output…only 68% of grapes produced in Georgia…[were] sold to state procurement agencies, as compared with 88% in Azerbaijan and 97% in Armenia.’[18] Much of the produce was transported to Russia for retailing through unofficial outlets. It was because of such ‘abuses’ that in 1972 Shevardnadze was sent to take control, with a view to increasing Georgia's official production by the reorganization of agricultural practices.[19]

From 1987 unofficial groups with ecological aims emerged in Georgia. Their first campaign focussed on a typical USSR mammoth project – a railway to connect Tbilisi with Orjonikidze through the Great Caucasus range, which, because of protests about its environmental, cultural and economic implications (and the secrecy maintained by the government) was shelved in August 1988.[20] One aspect of this project which was thus avoided was that, while the new railway would have improved goods and passenger transport between Georgia and the trans-Terek lands, it would also have facilitated rapid transportation of Russian troops to Moscow's Transcaucasia Military District headquarters in Tbilisi.

As the smallest of the South Caucasian republics, Armenia inevitably depends for the development of its economy on the co-operation of its larger neighbours, which has often been lacking – for example, in the repeated postponement of a railway to link Yerevan with the Tbilisi–Baku line at Akstafa. Funding for this had been sanctioned in the 1930s, but it was halted by Beria because it would not have been in Georgia's interests. Construction was not resumed until after Stalin's death, and the Yerevan–Akstafa mainline was completed about 1988.[21] A new problem created by the Soviet predilection for grandiose ‘transformations of nature’ was the 1930s project for tapping the water of Lake Sevan to augment the river Hrazdan, thus increasing Yerevan's supply of drinking and irrigation water, as well as hydroelectric power. The opening of the pipes in 1949, however, led to a drop of 66 feet in the level of Lake Sevan, with disastrous effects on its surroundings, which necessitated constructing a long tunnel through surrounding mountains to divert compensating water into the lake from another river. As Yerevan's population increased, the problem of providing sufficient electric power was solved by building a power station fuelled by natural gas from the Baku–Tbilisi pipeline – a piece of co-operation between Azerbaijan and Armenia which was hopefully given the name ‘Friendship’.[22]

In the 1960s and 1970s big improvements were made in Armenia's energy supply by bringing in natural gas pipelines to Yerevan and its surroundings to fuel new electric power stations, and in the south-east of the republic hydroelectric stations were built on the river Vorotan. The combined effect of these developments was a threefold increase of electric power.[23]

From the 1960s Armenia developed its own chemical industry, as well as metal-working and machine-engineering, including an automobile works. The country's most important field of technological development, however, arose from the fact that it is relatively rich in less-common ores, including molybdenum, gold, silver and the rare semi-conductor metals selenium and tellurium. Thus in the 1970s Yerevan became one of the USSR's most important centres for scientific research institutes and commercial production in the field of calculators, computers and related electronic equipment, and Armenia had the highest percentage of people after the RSFSR employed in intellectual work.[24] Its scientific achievements, especially in astrophysical research, had been recognized by the foundation of the Armenian

Academy of Sciences in 1943, and now Armenia played a leading part in the development of the USSR's cybernetics, electronics and computing.[25]

One result of this industrial development was a very high level of urbanization, which brought new problems by attracting a large influx of young people to Yerevan, whose population between 1959 and 1979 doubled to 1,119,000, while villages in mountain districts became depopulated. In the 1980s awareness of ecological problems led to public protests about air pollution from chemical works, and the depletion of Lake Sevan. After the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine, apprehension about the similar nuclear power plant at Medzamor which had opened in 1979 led to protests, and to its closure after a severe earthquake in December 1988, which caused a long-term shortage of electricity.[26]

The ‘second economy’

During these decades all three South Caucasian republics were officially credited with considerable improvements in industrial growth, living standards, health and educational services, particularly in comparison with their neighbours to the south – Turkey, Iran and Iraq.[27] However, as everywhere else in the USSR, this prosperity relied considerably upon the ‘second economy’ intertwined with the official economy and riddled with corruption up to the highest KPSS circles.

In Georgia the all-pervading ‘second economy’ allowed the accumulation of such great private wealth to some of the population that, according to one Western study, corruption, inefficiency and discrimination against minorities dominated Georgia's economic and political life. Holding office uninterruptedly for decades had made the post-Stalin bureaucratic clique in the republic an unbridled oligarchy, and this, combined with Caucasian reliance on close family and personal ties in all aspects of life, led to an impenetrable system of mutual aid, protection and disregard for those who were outside the system.[28] This was confirmed by Shevardnadze who, as head of Georgia's Ministry of the Interior in 1965–72 and as KP first secretary thereafter, says he attempted to restore legality:

> I did not immediately see the connection between the flaws of centralized economic management and bureaucratic corruption…The most cherished concepts were used as camouflage for embezzlement. For me, the fight against the corruption…and under-the-table deals…prevalent at the highest levels of public life, became a matter of saving our chief national assets. A nation corroded by cancerous graft was doomed to degeneration…[through] the corrosive influence of a few criminal clans enjoying protection in high places…I also sought ways to weaken the excessive dictatorship of [the Moscow government and]…to challenge the dominance of the command-administrative system, which robbed the republic of any autonomy.[29]

Among the most notorious adepts of corruption in Georgia had been the wives of Mzhavanadze and Churkin (the Georgian KP's previous first secretary) – who lived like empresses on the proceeds of bribery.[30]

The ‘second economy’ and corruption were everywhere in the USSR, but it has been argued that in Georgia they arose from ‘the core values of Georgian culture’ – patterns of behaviour which a Georgian male was obliged to follow and which explained why ‘Georgia, of all the Soviet Republics, should possess such a dynamic and deeply entrenched second economy…estimated by some scholars at over 28% of the Republic's GNP’. These conventions include: family honour, which ‘requires the demonstration of “manliness” and use of goods in display and consumption’; competitiveness, requiring conspicuous display and risk-taking; and networks – ‘the body of people to whom [a man] can personally relate and through whom he can extend relations with others’ who are potentially useful to him. Adherence to these social values in a context of perpetual shortage of desirable goods explains ‘why people accept the daily risk-taking involved in regular second-economy work, and also why the entrepreneurial spirit should be so pronounced in Soviet Georgia despite Moscow's persistent attempts to control it’. Perhaps, too, this reflects Georgian national characteristics: Georgian second-economy operators were ‘entrepreneurs of a different mould from those traditionally associated with Western capitalism, which involved thrift and…deferred gratification’, whereas Georgians are ‘gambling entrepreneurs concerned to spend and display’. The absence from the Georgian economy of the institutionalized ‘fixer’ (Russian *tolkach*, ‘pusher’) illustrates a deep divide ‘between the formal, bureaucratic… way [in which] the economy is supposed to work – and the nepotistic, highly personalized entrepreneurial nature of Georgia's economy’: the Georgians do not need the ‘fixer’ because ‘Every Georgian is a potential *tolkach* in his own interest or the interest of his network.’ Consequently, in Georgia ‘replacing one [official] by another cannot really change anything…[because,] though a person can be replaced, networks continue to exist'. Thus, the difference between Russia's second economy and that of Georgia '[is not] merely one of degree…it is based on a fundamental cultural distinction'.[31]

Despite Shevardnadze's condemnation of nepotism, regional cronyism, abuse of rank, sale of public office, protectionism and bribery, none of them disappeared, and crime for the profit of 'private business empires' continued to flourish, including armed raids on orchards or vineyards to steal produce for Georgia's fruit-salesmen operating in Russia – without whose enterprise no one would ever have had a chance to buy lemons in Russia![32]

No less corrupt was Armenia where, in the absence of any aspiring reformer of Shevardnadze's stature, the apparent invulnerability of the top leadership was guaranteed by 'a tightly woven network of friends and colleagues'[33] providing mutual protection from detection. Occasionally an honest official would attempt to expose his seniors' wrongdoing, but it was practically impossible for an individual to get through the network, as S. Kurinyan, head of the Armenian CID, discovered to his cost when he was framed and imprisoned after compiling a dossier on the crimes of high officials. One aspect of second-economy initiative which flourished in Armenia (and elsewhere) in the 1960s and 1970s was the operation of buses for private profit by drivers who 'leased' them from the state-run municipal transport depot. In 1984 the USSR's bureaucracy produced yet another resolution on Armenia, deploring the prevalence of 'bribery, speculation, money-grubbing and protectionism'. Three years later, in the spirit of Gorbachov's hopes that self-purging by the KPSS would bring about the moral renewal of the USSR, H. Kotanjyan, one of Armenia's senior KP officials, criticized the whole Armenian party organization for similar crimes, and demanded that its first secretary, Demirdzyan, resign. Later Kotanjyan was joined by S. Khachatryan in accusing the republican leadership not only of opposing all attempts at restructuring, but even of preventing the local press from publishing any exposé of the existing situation. Obstinately entrenched, and left undisturbed by Gorbachov because they accepted the status quo in Karabagh, Demirdzyan and his cronies ignored all criticism until May 1988, when they were at last ousted on Moscow's orders.[34]

Azerbaijan may have been even more corrupt than Georgia or Armenia, according to the book *Party or Mafia? A Plundered Republic*, which appeared in 1976. Its author cited the usual vices among the *nomenklatura* which ensured that, while individuals might be pilloried in the press and subjected to ‘ritual disfavour’, they were seldom expelled from that circle.[35] An exception was the Azerbaijanian KP's first secretary, Mustafayev, who was deposed for corruption in 1958. Heydar Aliyev, who had a lifelong association with the secret police, became chairman of the Azerbaijan KGB in 1967, and much of his energy went into gathering evidence of corruption against Mustafayev's successor, V. Akhundov, who was removed from his post in 1969. Aliyev, vowing (like Shevardnadze) to eradicate bribery, intrigues and nepotism, launched a purge of Akhundov's colleagues, for which he received honours from President Brezhnev. However, Aliyev himself packed the republic's bureaucracy with KGB colleagues and relatives and cronies from his native region, Nakhchavan, until Aliyev's ‘honest’ protégés from the KGB were accused of bribery and corruption, and twenty-nine of them were dismissed.[36]

In many ways Azerbaijan, despite the European aspect of its capital Baku, functioned like a Central Asian republic such as Uzbekistan, whose traditional indigenous social organization was said to be impenetrable even to the KGB.[37] Social relations here were based on the town district (Arabic 'mahallah') where one was born and grew up, and where 'kith and kin and tribe and clan, not the artificial political contrivances of the Soviet state, were the permanent and paramount realities'.[38] As ties of family and friendship were permanent and imposed obligations of mutual aid, nepotism was not seen as 'corrupt': any Muslim official was morally bound to give jobs to relatives and people from his *mahallah*. A late Soviet extension of this social system was the 'mafia' – a fusion of 'the traditional tribal structure…with the party structure to form a single, indissoluble whole', such that government officials could belong to the KPSS but also remain loyal to their clan in 'a natural, spontaneous form of resistance to Moscow's assimilationist policies'.[39] Within Azerbaijan's traditional system, nepotism existed up to the highest level, including the purchase of ministerial posts or 'election' to top legal posts. In everyday life bribes could buy entry to higher education, good progress marks, examination passes and even academic honours.

As Islam has an important social side, Azerbaijani communist officials attended religious funerals and other rituals and, despite USSR laws forbidding them, 'bride-price' (*kalym*) and the custom of destining girls exclusively for marriage persisted tacitly. This duality was no doubt encouraged by the Islamic principle of *taqiyyah*, which permits a pretence of conforming to surrounding social norms while inwardly maintaining Muslim attitudes which clash with them. As this principle is particularly associated with Shi^{c}ah Islam it is hard to know whether Islam had 'survived' or 'revived' in Azerbaijan under the communist régime. So far as the middle class and intelligentsia were concerned, however, Soviet secular education had inculcated modern, European ideas, and this was the basis of allegiance to Azerbaijan and of the nationalism which developed in the late 1980s.[40]

The supreme administrative posts in two South Caucasian republics were entrusted to KGB officials – Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze. It seems paradoxical that both have been described as reformers who 'displayed a degree of idealism' in tackling corruption. Their claim to have shunned self-interest or corrupt practices evokes scepticism, as it would be practically impossible for them to liberate themselves from the ubiquitous network of mutual obligation.[41] An apologist says of Aliyev that, while he had no intention of reforming the inherent tyranny of the KPSS, 'greed and bribery were offensive to his officer-corps spirit, nurtured in rigid subordination and blind obedience', so that he filled the Azerbaijan KP and administration with men who could be trusted – KGB officers, obedient and ready to be guided.[42] However, even their hands could scarcely remain clean, so that embezzlement, bribery, etc. still flourished in the South Caucasian republics 'on a staggering scale'.[43]

Secular culture, language and nationalism

The national cultures and traditions of the South Caucasus peoples revived after the worst features of the Stalin–Beria dictatorship disappeared, although any sign of ethnic self-assertion still evoked official condemnation and repression as 'manifestations of "bourgeois" nationalism'. In fact they were natural reactions to the Russian 'great-nation' nationalists' intolerance towards indigenous patriotism in their colonial possessions, and indignation about past oppression by the alien authorities. As everywhere else in the USSR, this meant above all the arbitrary destruction of relatives and friends during the communist Terror. The ‘rehabilitation’ of victims which Khrushchov initiated in 1956 at least allowed people to refer to those events and demand to know who had been to blame. Among the victims most publicly mourned were the scholars, writers, musicians and artists who had been abruptly murdered, then glibly ‘rehabilitated’.

Azerbaijan

One absurd aspect of KPSS attacks on national cultures was that even oral folk epics, which were preserved by tradition and later published in print, were often condemned for their ‘harmful’ content (usually anti-Russian sentiments) and were banned or retrospectively rewritten. This began with ‘criticism’ of the Kalmyk epic *Janhr* in 1934; thereafter Turkic epics were victimized: *Dede Korkut* in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, *Alpamysh* in Uzbekistan and *Koblandy Batyr* in Kazakstan. In these republics native KP leaders spuriously condemned their countries’ epics as ‘feudal’, ‘anti-democratic’, ‘clerical’, ‘pan-Turkic’, etc. Once Stalin was gone, the timid ‘rehabilitation’ of these epics began, and people declared that the communists’ process of condemning them and their long-dead, anonymous authors had been a pointless farce.[44]

In Azerbaijan the condemnation of *Dede Korkut* had been led by First Secretary Baghyrov, who zealously promoted the ‘friendship of Soviet peoples’, and condemned Azerbaijani historians for writing that their country had resisted subjugation by the Russians, when the ‘correct’ view was that they voluntarily embraced the privilege and acknowledged

Russia's ‘civilizing mission’. The general relaxation after 1953 seemed to permit a more rational approach, and work began on the first extensive history of Azerbaijan in Azerbaijani. The aim of this project, however, proved to be nationalistic and political: largely asserting the historical primacy of the Azerbaijanis in eastern Caucasus by proclaiming that the people known to the ancient Greeks as Albanians were the ancestors of the Azerbaijanis. This presumption was meant to refute the Armenians’ claim that the region widely known by the Turkic name Karabagh was originally part of the Armenian homeland.[45] Azerbaijanian literature also began to recover, as some writer-victims of the Terror, e.g. M. Musfiq and H. Javid, were rehabilitated, and new works in the spirit of the ‘Thaw’ were published by I. Huseynov, A. Väliyev and others.[46] However, it is symptomatic of the cryptic ways of Azerbaijan that these ‘rehabilitations’ were not made public as they occurred and were not accompanied by republication of the writers’ works – as if giving notice that freedom of speech could still be repressed.[47]

In 1958 Mustafayev acknowledged the importance of the Azerbaijani language as the vehicle of national culture, with an amendment to the republic's constitution designating Azerbaijani as its official language. He also resisted the implementation of Khrushchov's decree which allowed parents to choose either a Russian-language or a native-language school for their children. Instead, he introduced an education law that made Russian a compulsory subject in Azerbaijani schools, and Azerbaijani compulsory in the republic's Russian schools – thus removing the bias against native languages created by the 1938 law which had made Russian an obligatory subject in all non-Russian schools. An example of this was that, although 85% of students in Baku university were Azerbaijani, in the important Oil–Gas Institute all classes were conducted in Russian. It was no consolation to national pride that the government's provision of instruction in Russian in schools gave pupils a very useful tool in the Russian-language context of the USSR, since this was still perceived as discrimination against Azerbaijani students and culture. In any case, in the 1960s–70s the educational level in Azerbaijan was low, with high rates of illiteracy and truancy from school, and access to higher education warped by bribery.[48] The Azerbaijanis' new language law was remarkable in a republic not noted for striking attitudes on matters of national pride (as did the young poet of the 1960s, Khalil Riza, in his 'Mother Tongue', where he glorified Azerbaijani and decried the dominance of Russian).

Of the three largest South Caucasian nationalities, until now the Azerbaijanis had the weakest conviction of national identity and the least developed nationalism. However, in the 1960s, the Azerbaijani educational establishment started asserting their 'Albanian' ancestry and elaborating a nationalist doctrine which was essentially anti-Armenian – since, according to one writer, the Azerbaijanis were still hampered by 'a sense of social inferiority' and chose to perceive the (much-persecuted and well-nigh homeless) Armenians as 'a powerful, influential people close to the centres of Soviet power who have imperial designs on Azerbaijani territory'.[49] Thus in Azerbaijan, as elsewhere, the 1970s saw a wave of officially tolerated patriotism, with writers and historians striving to 'recover the past', about which so much had been suppressed during the previous 30 years. Patriotic sympathies (and even the trend towards assertion of Azerbaijani national identity) were attributed to First Secretary Heydar Aliyev – to many people the embodiment of Brezhnevist political reaction.[50]

The other side of the ‘Turkish’ view of Azerbaijanian origins is anti-Persianism. An example of this is an article offering ‘New light on certain problems of Safavid history in contemporary Iranian historiography’ in the symposium *Against Bourgeois Falsifiers of Azerbaijan's History and Culture*, published in 1978. Here it is asserted that ‘One of the ways in which Iranian writers most frequently distort the truth is to ignore the fact that the Azerbaijanis are a distinct autochthonous nation, by subsuming their history, culture and language under the history of Iran and “the Iranians”.’ The author claims that ‘in Iranian historiography right up to the present day’ the Safavid dynasty is presented as an Iranian ‘Aryan’ nation-state with Shi^{c}ism as its national religion, ‘whereas in fact it was an Azerbaijanian state’.[51] However ‘Azerbaijanian’ is understood here, the whole question of the ethnic and Islamic ancestry of Ismail, the founder of the Safavid dynasty, is too complicated and controversial to be asserted in such a superficial way.[52]

In addition to any local bias arising from ethnic or religious convictions, the historiography of Azerbaijan was distorted by the Russian communist régime's anti-Western rhetoric, naively designed to justify Russian militarism, which occured in innumerable Azerbaijanian (and other Caucasian) publications. One example of this is a belated attack on one of the pioneering studies of Russia's wars in the Caucasus: Baddeley's *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*. First published in 1908, this is a well-researched, modestly written book and, although it was published at the height of the imperial rivalry between Britain and Russia, the passages critical of the Russian commanders in the war against the native peoples are restrained and balanced, and based on Russian sources. Nor does Baddeley omit criticism of Shamil, the leader of the native resistance. However, when growing interest in Russian history led to the reprinting of this book in the West in 1969 it was castigated (nine years later!) by Azerbaijani academics. A reviewer conformed to the official paranoia by presenting its reissue as part of a capitalist conspiracy to misrepresent Russia's role in the history of Azerbaijan as military conquest, whereas the ostensibly true official version was that

> The arrival of Russian troops in the Caspian provinces [in 1622] fulfilled the dreams of the [‘Azerbaijanian’] masses who, from time immemorial [!] had… maintained economic relations with Russian cities… [and] had had ample time to get to know the Russians well and appreciate their humane qualities. This explains the joy of the local population when they learned of the arrival of Russian troops in their country.

Apart from its mawkish hyperbole, the most striking feature of this article is the underlying theme of Azerbaijani nationalism: Baddeley and his publishers ‘ought to have known that Arran, Karabagh and the city of Barda lay, not in Persia, but in Azerbaijan, and that from time immemorial the inhabitants of Barda were Azerbaijanis’.[53] Admittedly one would expect the inhabitants of a land called Azerbaijan to be Azerbaijanis, but the statement above raises many questions about part of historical Albania's name ‘Aran’ (not the Arabic ‘ar-Ran/Arran’) and its original probably Caucasian (not Turkic) language; about the great Persian Empire of which (truly ‘from time immemorial’!) Azerbaijan, formerly Atropatenian Media, and Shirvan were provinces; and about the waves of Turkic peoples from Central Asia who subsequently inundated not only Azerbaijan, but also most of Persia, the Caucasus and Asia Minor. To assert, as some Azerbaijani historians have done, that the Azerbaijanians, or at least those in what was formerly 'Russian Azerbaijan' (i.e. Shirvan), were by the eighteenth century a distinct people, who had 'always' lived there (i.e. were 'autochthonous')[54] is nonsensical. Azerbaijan was for many centuries (like Georgia) a part of the Persian Empire – and the latter a state which itself underwent frequent periods of instability and fragmentation.[55] Even such a relatively homogeneous country as Georgia, with a fractious but unquestionably ancient dynasty and strongly Christian unity (apart from the tactical 'conversion' of some of its princes to Islam from considerations of self-preservation), was prevented from unification and remained seriously divided. On the other hand, the historical fact that the irrepressible and patriotic Georgian people and their national homeland were for long periods obliged to be subject to Persia is readily acknowledged by them without embarrassment.

Azerbaijanian chauvinism in real life was demonstrated in Gakh-Balakan (formerly Zakatala) region north-west of Shaki, which was transferred from Georgia to Azerbaijan in 1921 even though it was historically Georgian and its Azerbaijani population only 5%. The local Georgian community, part Christian, part Muslim, known as Ingilos (35% of the population) had become largely Azerbaijanized since the 1950s by enforced assimilation and dispersion, involving the systematic destruction of Georgian churches, the eviction of Georgian farmers and settlement of Azerbaijanis in their place. Here, as everywhere in Azerbaijan, the registration of all Muslims as 'Azerbaijanis', irrespective of their ethnicity, led to an official figure of over 90% Azerbaijanis in the population, so that the 1959 census did not show a single Georgian, Ingilo or Daghestani in the region.[56] As there was discrimination against the Ingilos in education, with Georgian schools being closed and Georgian textbooks prohibited, many Christian Ingilos sent their children to study in Tbilisi on Georgian government scholarships. The Azerbaijanian authorities willingly accepted this, expecting that Ingilo students would not return to Azerbaijan, thus further increasing the ethnic homogeneity of the region; Muslim Ingilos, on the other hand, were prevented from going to Georgia. Because Azerbaijan discriminated against Ingilos in employment, refused them cultural facilities, and prohibited their use of Georgian personal names, protests were staged in Georgia in 1982. In 1988 the Moscow government attempted to reduce tension (and Georgian retaliation against the Azerbaijani community in Georgia) by arranging exchanges of students, but this had no effect.[57] The Azerbaijanian government tried to justify removing all trace of Georgian culture within its borders by the untenable assertion that Ingilo territory had 'always' been Azerbaijani, basing its claim on the obscure history of Caucasian Albania, manipulated to provide 'evidence' of continuity between it and twentieth-century Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, a similar claim to direct descent from Caucasian Albania was made (with at least as much justification) by the Lezgis, while Georgian historians also claimed that Hereti, formerly part of Albania, including the Ingilo region and the Shirvani province of Shaki, was rightfully part of Georgia.[58]

Whatever First Secretary Aliyev's view was of the Azerbaijanis' ethnic origins, his KGB was vigilant, and one of the first leaders of Azerbaijan's democratic movement, the historian Abulfäz Aliyev (known as Elchibey – *Ambassador*) was imprisoned in 1975–6 for 'nationalism'. Many Azerbaijanis sharing Elchibey's ideas joined in the 1978 demonstrations against Moscow's proposed constitutional amendment which would have removed Azerbaijani's status as an official language.[59] By then the population of the

Azerbaijan SSR was more than 6,000,000, of whom 78.1% were said to be Azerbaijanis, 8% Armenians, 8% Russians and 2.6% Lezgis, and for the first time urban population exceeded rural.[60] So far as language was concerned, while 43% of Azerbaijanis and Armenians living in Azerbaijan could speak Russian fluently, few Russians learned to speak Azerbaijani. Put otherwise: 57% of Azerbaijanis did *not* have a fluent command of Russian, which evoked prejudice and physical abuse from Russian conscript soldiers fighting in Afghanistan (where the USSR had set up a puppet régime and intervened in a civil war in 1979–89).[61]

Despite superficial ‘anti-corruption campaigns’, everyday ethics in Azerbaijan had not improved by the 1980s, when a Moscow Commission demanded the closure of Azerbaijan's Economics Institute because of the ignorance not only of its students, but also of its staff, as the result of ‘normal’ corrupt practices such as inflated entrance examination marks, and the illiteracy of some lecturers in their ‘specialist’ subjects, as they had paid to have their higher degree dissertations written for them. Family ties and mutual protection operated, as some professors found when they reported such abuses and were silenced by a general closing of *nomenklatura* ranks in Baku and Moscow.[62]

In the late 1970s patriotic sentiments verging on the anti-Russian began to appear in Azerbaijani literature, such as a fable satirizing the ‘correct’ historical view of Azerbaijan's debt to the friendship and superior culture of Russia.[63] However, no Azerbaijani dissident movement appeared, and there was at first little publicity for Gorbachov's ‘restructuring’ and ‘openness’, undoubtedly because Heydar Aliyev simply prevented news of Gorbachov's reforms being published in the Azerbaijanian press. Shortly after Brezhnev's death in 1982 Aliyev had been appointed first deputy prime minister and a member of the Politburo in Yuriy Andropov's short-lived USSR government. Thereafter he ostentatiously proclaimed his attachment to Stalinist ways by ignoring Gorbachov's condemnation of ‘immodesty’ among KPSS leaders and allowing a bronze bust of himself to be erected in his home province of Nakhchavan. Corruption flourished during Aliyev's 13 years of despotic rule in Azerbaijan, when he was occasionally acclaimed as God incarnate or, at a reception in Karabagh in 1981, was hailed by a poet as ‘the prophet ᶜAli’.[64] One notorious case of Aliyev's despotism was the persecution of Azerbaijan's chief prosecutor, Gambay Mamedov, as a ‘troublemaker’ because he had attempted to have criminal abuse of office exposed and punished. Mamedov (luckier than chief investigator Babayev, who was executed) survived dismissal from his post on spurious charges, and took refuge in Leningrad for seven years.[65] Aliyev himself paid a moderate price for a long career of shady politics when he was removed from both his Moscow government posts and the headship of the Azerbaijan KP in October 1987 – officially because of health problems. He then disappeared from public view – as some thought, for ever.[66]

In Azerbaijan some mosques were reopened during the Second World War, and one of the Muslim religious boards established by Moscow was the Shiᶜah board in Baku, with the pre-1917 ‘Sheykh ul-Islam’, Hajji Mullah Aghalizadä, as its chairman. State tolerance towards Islam increased after Stalin's death, and a few Muslims, including Azerbaijanis, were allowed to perform the long-prohibited Hajj, as part of the USSR's ‘peace campaign’ to gain influence in the Middle East.[67] However, anti-Islamic propaganda continued, the main target being Shamil's *jihad* against Russia, and when

Khrushchov revived atheism, with extreme denigration of Islam in the Soviet press, many mosques in Azerbaijan were again closed. In 1959 policy altered again: the anti-Islamic campaign was deemed counterproductive, and press attacks on religious leaders ceased. By the 1970s, not only did officially sanctioned religious observances persist but, despite the law that 'any kind of religious activity outside the working mosques is illegal and strictly forbidden',[68] unofficial or 'parallel' Islam also flourished in the form of pilgrimages to 'holy places' (*mazâr*s) associated with Muslim saints, which became 'real centres of religious life, more significant than the few working mosques'.[69] So far as the division between the main branches of Islam is concerned, in 'Russian Azerbaijan' the minority Sunnis and the predominant Shi^{c}ahs mostly shared the same mosques, although they had separate cemeteries.[70] In general, as a 'structured, hierarchically organized establishment, the Shia Church is more vulnerable to external pressure and has suffered more than the highly decentralised Sunni Islam', but although Azerbaijan's Shi^{c}ah imams seemed more submissive to Moscow, 'Shiism, with its intense emotional appeal and its Cult of Sacrifice…[was] more deeply rooted in popular sensibility than Sunnism.'[71] Although the KPSS's crude anti-religious measures had little effect, the authorities continued to go through the prescribed anti-religious rituals – for instance, in 1985 they timed an anti-religious campaign in Azerbaijan to coincide with the Ashura festival during Muharram. At the same time it was reported that the Shi^{c}ah clergy were 'modernizing' by reducing the number of daily prayers and the duration of certain rituals, so that less working time would be lost. Seven years into Russia's war in Afghanistan, Moscow stepped cautiously to avoid antagonizing world Muslim opinion, but a conference on

‘Muslims in the struggle for peace’ held in Baku in October 1986 was boycotted by many Islamic countries.[72]

Georgia

While patriotism in Georgia was less muted than in Azerbaijan, the misplaced pride in Stalin cherished by some Georgians gave it sinister overtones. In 5 March 1956, for instance, a week after Khrushchov's denunciation of Stalin, daily celebrations began at the Stalin monument in Tbilisi to commemorate the ‘great Georgian’ who had ruled all Russia. Although Mzhavanadze's government condoned this, it decided that a student procession through the streets constituted a riot, and to ‘restore order’ security forces opened fire, leaving many demonstrators dead or wounded. Even 30 years later so little evidence about this event had been made available that it was impossible to assess clearly its causes and significance.[73] Since no Georgian Solzhenitsyn emerged to impress upon the population the truth about the Stalin–Beria KPSS's responsibility for the Terror and the concentration camps, it was possible for nationalists to go on idolizing Stalin and displaying his portrait. After the KPSS Congress of 1961, where Khrushchov's ‘secret’ denunciation was reinforced, resulting in the removal of Stalin's body from the Red Square mausoleum and of his name from cities which had been called after him, Stalin's gigantic statue was removed from the hilltop above Tbilisi. A history of Georgia published there in 1968 did briefly mention the Terror – but blamed it not on Stalin, but entirely on Beria and his ‘despicable pygmies’, and, while not being so devoid of references to Stalin as histories of the USSR issued in Moscow, refrained entirely from criticizing him.[74] Until the 1980s Tbilisi's Stalin Park and Stalin Embankment retained their names, and the Stalin Museum in Gori was still offered as a tourist excursion.[75]

During the last year of the dictator's life, when Russo-centric Soviet nationalism was combined with the stifling of patriotism among non-Russian peoples, the Georgian KP still targeted writers and artists. First Secretary Mgeladze particularly criticized the Megrelian writer Konstantin Gamsakhurdia for his ‘bourgeois-nationalist idealization of the past’. Similarly, Georgian patriotism was one of Shevardnadze's first targets when he became first secretary in Tbilisi in 1972: historians were severely criticized for publications about the Russian Civil War and the democratic Georgian republic, because they ‘had departed from the KP assessment’ of the Menshevik leader Zhordania as a ‘double-dyed national chauvinist and inveterate enemy of Soviet Georgia’, and had dared to describe Georgia's 1918 declaration of independence as a ‘progressive act’.[76] Georgia's dissident movement was anticipated in the early 1960s, with protests about the neglect of historic buildings and the organized theft of Georgian Orthodox Church treasures.[77]

In the 1970s Gamsakhurdia's son Zviad, a lecturer in English literature, and Merab Kostava (both Megrelians) emerged as leaders of the Georgian dissident movement. Human rights were the focus of demonstrations in Tbilisi led by Z. Gamsakhurdia and Valentina Pailodze (who was imprisoned in 1974 for ‘religious activity’). As the Georgian KGB's treatment of political prisoners was notorious for continuing NKVD practices of beating and torture, in January 1977 a Georgian ‘Watch Group’ in the spirit of the Helsinki Accords was formed in Tbilisi, with Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Kostava among its leaders. Because of their articles in defence of human rights, and their contacts with Moscow dissidents and Western journalists, both were harassed, then arrested and imprisoned in Tbilisi for a year, during which they were subjected to psychiatric torture. Thereafter both were sentenced to five years' labour camp and exile. Zviad Gamsakhurdia's trial was accompanied by a sinister episode: he was induced to appear on Georgian television to 'confess his mistakes' and denounce his fellow dissidents. A year later he was 'pardoned' and allowed to return to his former activities, while practically all other Georgian dissidents remained in labour camps.[78]

By then Georgian nationalism enjoyed wide public support. The increasing use of Russian rather than Georgian for teaching in schools and higher education had led to passionate protests by Georgian writers in 1973 and 1976 – although in fact,

> the Soviet census of 1979 yield[s] scant evidence of a weakening of the position of the Georgian, Armenian, or Azeri languages…the titular nationality of each republic comprised over two-thirds of its population, while Russians accounted for less than eight percent… In all three republics, over 95 percent of the titular nationality considered the language of their nationality to be their native language…[and] only between one-fourth and one-third claimed a fluent knowledge of Russian as a second language.[79]

When in 1978 the Moscow and Tbilisi governments proposed to remove from Georgia's constitution the statement that Georgian was its sole official language, thousands of people came out in unprecedented demonstrations, which eventually induced the authorities to acquiesce to public opinion and retain the crucial statement. Demonstrations in defence of the Georgian language continued for several years[80] and received encouragement not only from Konstantin Gamsakhurdia but also the Orthodox catholicos Ilia. The Georgian intelligentsia's patriotism now had an explicitly historical and religious dimension: the ancient capital, Mtskheta, became the scene of demonstrations, its cathedral was increasingly chosen for weddings, and its seminary recruited many novices, while in general church attendance and celebration of baptisms and weddings increased considerably.[81]

In addition to their clear demographic and linguistic preponderance in their republic, a higher percentage of Georgians received higher education and/or were members of the KPSS than the titular nationality in any other SSR. However, Georgian society remained highly traditional, with strong customs governing family relationships and marriages, which were mainly of Georgian to Georgian, so that the perpetuation of the Georgian people seemed assured.[82] Nevertheless, many Georgians feared that they would be swamped by neighbouring Muslim peoples, whose population had more than doubled between 1959 and 1989 (e.g. the Azerbaijanis had increased by 131%, Chechens by 130%, Avars by 124%), whereas the Georgians’ growth of 48% and the Armenians’ of 66%, although high by European standards, seemed relatively modest.[83]As a result, influential Georgians, including Shevardnadze, began to display a nationalistic attitude in urging compatriots to increase the birth rate in their republic, with exhortations to young Georgians to recognize their patriotic duty to create a strong, healthy Georgia by marrying early and having up to twelve children. While the reason he gave for this was that

‘Many children means many farm-workers, many engineers… many scientists and creative artists, many soldiers and generals…’, his conclusion was patriotic: ‘Many children means Georgia's immortality.’[84]

The Georgians had a long national tradition and, even if they owed much to Russia in terms of modern civilization and technology, they did not lack inherent self-esteem – indeed, in comparison with Russians and Azerbaijanis, they ‘stand out by their proud, often flamboyant bearing, which is based on a conviction of the superiority of their own culture and achievements’.[85] As Georgians addressed their social and political problems in the 1980s there was much talk of the alienation of young people from the Soviet system, of a turning to religion, nationalism and, as the war in Afghanistan dragged on, pacifism. Anti-Russian sentiments were also unintentionally provoked by Shevardnadze in 1983, when he promoted celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Treaty of Georgiyevsk, which had bound Georgia to Russia – but Shevardnadze, always attempting to balance his local loyalty against the dictates of Moscow, had little choice.[86]

Although during the Second World War the Georgian Orthodox Church (like other religions) had flourished, and gained recognition of its autocephality by the Russian patriarchate, until 1964 there were so few Georgian clergy that the church barely survived, its services seldom being conducted in the Georgian language, and only five of its bishoprics being occupied. The new Georgian catholicos Eprem II, appointed in 1960, had little alternative to collaboration with the KPSS as the cost of the state's toleration of the church's existence, and its ambiguous relationship with Moscow led to its rejection by the World

Council of Churches when it applied for membership in 1962. By then, however, the rejuvenated church had 7 bishops, 105 priests and 80 parishes, and in 1964 a seminary was opened at Mtskheta. In the 1970s the revival of interest in national identity affected both Georgia and Armenia. As in many parts of the USSR, societies for the preservation and restoration of historic buildings were founded, and popular traditions were revived, as was discussion of the cultural significance of orthodoxy in Georgia's history – a point further reinforced by Catholicos Ilia II, elected in 1977. Thereafter the World Council of Churches withdrew its rejection of the Georgian Orthodox Church, and indeed elected Ilia as its president. An important event in the growth of Georgia's national liberation movement was a clandestine article blaming ‘Bolshevik terrorists’ for the death in 1907 of its ‘spiritual father’, Ilia Cḥavcḥavadze. He was canonized as a saint of the Georgian Orthodox Church in 1987, and the foundation of the ‘Society of Ilia the Righteous’ inspired the formation of political groups. While this revival of Georgia's historical and religious heritage proceeded, the state authorities under Shevardnadze responded by reasserting communist doctrine, arresting people for ‘religious activity’ and using the secret police to discredit the church by publicizing the misdemeanours of some of its clergy.[87]

Armenia

The most complicated religious situation among Caucasian Christians was in Armenia, because of the extreme importance of the Armenian Apostolic (Gregorian) Church in the nation's life, and the very large diaspora: in 1970, 2.5 million Armenians lived in the Armenian SSR, a further 1.1 million in other parts of the USSR, and 2 million scattered throughout the world. Before 1941 the diaspora had split into those who sympathized with the Soviet Union's socialist ideals and those who rejected them entirely, but during the war even the latter, responding to a wave of patriotism, sent contributions to the USSR's war effort. Some Armenian churches were reopened, imprisoned clergy were allowed to return to Armenia and, with an eye to sympathy in the West, Moscow permitted the foundation of a seminary and printing house in Echmiadzin. In 1945 Stalin made a further concession to the Apostolic Church by permitting the 'election' of the acting catholicos as Kevork VI. On the strength of this, thousands of Armenian émigrés responded to an invitation to return to their 'homeland' in the USSR – at a time when the country had little spare food or accommodation – and the Stalin–Beria tyranny was waiting to send some of them to prison camps. Many of the immigrants quickly became disillusioned and returned to the West (if they could). As a demonstration of his appreciation of Moscow's favour, Catholicos Kevork acted as the nominal initiator of Stalin's demand to Turkey in 1945 for the 'return' of the formerly Armenian Kars–Ardahan region to the USSR. Another aspect of Soviet foreign relations which Kevork supported was Moscow's monotonous vituperation against the Roman Catholic Church.[88]

After Kevork VI's death in 1955 the Gregorian Church elected a priest from communist Romania, who became Catholicos Vazgen I. This displeased many of the diaspora – in particular those under the jurisdiction of the catholicos of Cilicia (located at Antilias in Syria) many of whom were descended from refugees who had fled from Turkey in 1920. The political intrigues between Echmiadzin and Antilias were complicated, as the latter prepared to elect a new, anti-communist catholicos of Cilicia, while the USSR, represented by Vazgen, strove to prevent this. Nevertheless, the Dashnak adherent, Zareh Paiaslyan, was duly elected, and the Apostolic Church remained divided for decades to come.[89]

Meanwhile, in the Armenian SSR Vazgen used his influence in Moscow to achieve the return of several churches and monasteries to the use of the church and, although the KP closed seven churches in 1969, Armenia enjoyed more religious freedom than any other part of the USSR. The Armenian Church flourished, as did pilgrimages to Echmiadzin and other shrines. In their rituals the Armenians still adhered to pre-Christian traditions, practising blood sacrifice of poultry or sheep, even within the precincts of Echmiadzin cathedral, and festooning bushes with votive rags.[90] Vazgen also nurtured contacts with the Armenian diaspora, especially in the USA, soliciting from its members, such as the oil magnate C. Gulbenkyan, benefactions to support Echmiadzin and the Apostolic Church. Many churches and monasteries were renovated, and stocks of Armenian Bibles were imported from abroad at a time when it was impossible to buy Bibles anywhere else in the USSR. From 1962 Vazgen's wooing of the diaspora also led to a movement unique in the USSR: a second wave of ‘repatriation’ of Armenians from abroad. This was better organized than the earlier immigration, but was balanced by some emigration to Western countries.

An indication of the supreme status that Echmiadzin now enjoyed among the world Armenian community was that in 1985 it received $230,000 from a diaspora charitable fund – many times more than the sum for the Cilician catholicosate. Moreover, despite Vazgen's ambiguous position as head of a church in a communist state, he had succeeded in overcoming the opposition of the Cilicians, who re-established relations with Echmiadzin in 1980. (This rapprochement, however, owed something to Russia's KGB, which had insinuated itself into the Dashnak leadership of the Cilician church.)[91]

Vazgen's dictatorial rule, combined with his avoidance of conflict with Moscow, was not approved of by all believers in the Armenian SSR, as political dissidents or overzealous churchmen who defied the communist government received no support from him as spiritual head of the Armenian people. In 1979 Eduard Harutyunyan's appeal to Vazgen to support the Helsinki Watch group's request for the release of political prisoners resulted in nothing except its leaders' arrest. Long before that, an archdeacon, Garnik Tsarukyan (whose family had immigrated from Greece in 1948) had proposed to the catholicos that Armenian priests who had perished in Russia's GULag should be canonized. Receiving no reply, Tsarukyan went on hunger strike and was taken to a KGB psychiatric 'hospital'. He was refused permission to re-emigrate and was persecuted until 1984, when he said in a sermon that Armenian church leaders collaborated with the KGB. Once again Tsarukyan was condemned to three years in Yerevan's psychiatric prison. In contacts with foreigners Vazgen 'uniformly presented a glowing picture of religious faith among his people and uncritically supported Soviet rule' – leaving little doubt about his involvement with the KGB in controlling the Armenian Apostolic Church.[92]

The growth of nationalism in Armenia was foreshadowed during the last years of Stalin's life by KPSS criticism of Armenian writers and historians for adopting the 'single-stream' heresy in writing about their nation's history – that is, presenting the Armenians over the centuries as a unified community, in which upper and lower classes, sharing the same language, social mores, traditions and homeland, acted together under common motivation, instead of being divided according to Leninist dogma by the supposedly universal ‘class struggle’. The Armenian scholars’ failure to propagate this dogma was condemned as ‘idealization of the past’ and ‘bourgeois nationalism’. By 1952 the scourge of ideological retribution had fallen upon a republished novel by the nineteenth-century writer Raffí, historical studies by M. Nersisyan and other living scholars, and ‘bourgeois’ musical compositions by Aram Khachaturyan.[93]

However, after 1953 the Moscow government's attitude towards national sentiments relaxed somewhat, and the Armenian-born apparatchik Anastas Mikoyan argued for a more liberal view of Armenian patriotism. Catholicos Vazgen's enthronement in Echmiadzin, and the widening of cultural contacts with the diaspora, encouraged Armenians to value their culture. Then in 1956, as anti-communist demonstrations followed Khrushchov's condemnation of Stalin, and again in 1961 when his body was removed from the Moscow mausoleum, in Yerevan the colossal Stalin statue (the biggest in the USSR) atop the Second World War Museum was toppled. Amid these manifestations of ‘de-Stalinization’, Charents, Baḳunts and other Armenian writer-victims of the communist Terror, as well as Raffí and P̣atḳanyan, of the nineteenth century, were ‘rehabilitated’.[94]

When the fiftieth anniversary of the 1915 massacres was marked in Soviet Armenia in 1965, expressions of Armenian nationalism became explicitly anti-Turkish (despite a diplomatic rapprochement between the USSR and Turkey) while the Turkish government intensified its protestations of innocence and indeed its shameless denial that the genocide ever happened.[95] In 1967 the austere genocide memorial on one of Yerevan's hilltops was completed, as was the gigantic sculptured figure of the Armenian Motherland (rivalling that of Mother Georgia) which replaced the monstrous Stalin statue. Thereafter the genocide monument became the venue of the Armenian people's annual mass commemoration.[96]

At the same time a degree of Armenian nationalism became unofficially accepted in the republic, as did discrimination in favour of Armenians. Yerevan's courting of the diaspora continued successfully, as Armenian exiles received scholarships to study in Armenia, and the homeland received diaspora funding for cultural developments, so that Armenia enjoyed a somewhat more liberal atmosphere than any other SSR. However, this degree of relative intellectual freedom in their republic did not satisfy young Armenians, who in 1966 founded a secret National United Party (NUP) with the aims of regaining Nakhchavan and Karabagh from Azerbaijan, and the western provinces of Armenia, including Kars, from Turkey. In 1968 leadership of the NUP passed to Paruir Hairikyan, a Dashnaktsyutyun sympathizer, until his arrest and imprisonment in 1976. One of the NUP leaders, Stepan Zatikyan, held strongly anti-Soviet views and, like Armenian diaspora organizations attacking Turkish targets abroad, the NUP adopted terrorist measures for the achievement of Armenian independence (a rather unrealistic aim for a small country embedded in the monolithic Soviet Russian empire). In the USSR some eighty Armenians were sentenced as members of the NUP between 1965 and 1974, and in 1979 the killing of eight people by a bomb on a Moscow underground train was attributed to three Armenian students, who were executed.[97]

A new direction in Armenian political activity appeared in April 1977 with the founding in Yerevan of a Helsinki Watch group. Five of its members were arrested in December, and as the group's activities continued with an unsuccessful appeal to Vazgen to obtain the release of Armenian political prisoners, its head, Eduard Harutyunyan, who had been harassed by the KGB for years and psychiatrically tortured, was arrested for ‘defaming the Soviet system’, and sent to a labour camp. In 1978, on the anniversary of Stalin's death, a climax of public protest occurred in Armenia (as in Georgia and Azerbaijan) against Moscow's attempt to downgrade the national language clause in the republican constitutions, concluding successfully with the restoration of Armenian's official status. The population of Armenia in 1979 was 3,037,000, of whom nearly 90% were Armenian (the highest percentage of the titular nationality in any union republic).[98] Although some Armenians feared that the growing use of Russian in schools and higher education was undermining their national culture,[99] the fact was that ‘after 70 years of Soviet power, more Armenians spoke, read, wrote, argued and invented in Armenian than ever before’.[100]

It has been said that Armenian nationalism at this time was still Russophile, but this assumption of unquestioning loyalty was dubious, except in the case of career bureaucrats subservient to the Moscow KPSS headquarters. Undoubtedly the Russian government was determined to maintain the status quo in Armenia and the Caucasus in general, even at the risk of alienating its native inhabitants. Emigration of Armenians from the USSR was sanctioned, and by the 1980s several thousand had left, mainly for the USA, while persecution of Armenian dissidents continued, with trials of the historian Manucharyan for ‘anti-Soviet propaganda’, of members of a Union of Young Armenians, and the brutal beating of Marzpet Harutyunyan, who was denied medical assistance on his long journey to Perm GULag.[101]

Karabagh

Between Armenia and Azerbaijan there lay bones of contention which received little attention from Moscow: Nakhchavan ASSR and Highland Karabagh AP. For the Armenians, the evidence of early historians left little doubt that both had been Armenian territory in ancient times, long predating the Turkish influx. However, the Azerbaijan ASSR authorities ruling over them since 1923 had laboured to authenticate their own nationalistic contention that it was the Azerbaijanis' ancestors who originally inhabited the land known as 'Albania', supposedly including present-day Highland Karabagh and Nakhchavan. Historical sources scarcely support this case, since the Armenians considered only the territory north of the Kura as Albania, whereas Azerbaijanis extended this name, or 'Arran', to include the Armenian provinces of Artsakh, Utik and Paitakaran lying between the Kura and Araxes.[102]

In population, Highland Karabagh was still predominantly Armenian (as were the three Armenian enclaves in Azerbaijan, stretching from the northern border of Highland Karabagh almost to the Armenian SSR at Berd),[103] although the proportion of Armenians in Highland Karabagh had fallen from 89.6% in 1926 (with 10% Azerbaijanis) to 76.9% in 1989 (with 21.5% Azerbaijanis). Nakhchavan, on the other hand, had been practically cleared of Armenians, their share in its population having fallen from 42% in the 1890s to 11% in 1926, and only 0.6% in 1989, while the proportion of Azerbaijanis had grown correspondingly.[104] Since 1920 the Soviet government had played a double game with Armenia, appeasing Azerbaijan, the provider of oil, by granting it full possession of Karabagh and Nakhchavan and denying the Armenian SSR any jurisdiction over the Karabagh Armenians.

At the same time Moscow nurtured the Armenians' desire to regain lands ceded to Turkey in 1920, explicitly by its threatening behaviour towards Turkey in 1945, and by implication on Armenia's flag: 'No Russian or Armenian communist mentioned the problem of Turkish Armenia… but…the coat of arms of the Armenian SSR was a constant reminder…[since it] shows Mount Ararat, which today lies inside Turkish territory.'[105]

No protests about the situation in Karabagh were tolerated up to the 1950s. However, although there could be little demographic argument for restoring Nakhchavan to Armenia, successive censuses showed Armenians retaining their majority in Highland Karabagh's population: in 1959 – 86%, 1970 – 82%, 1979 and 1989 – 77%. The first sign of Armenian–Azerbaijani conflict over Karabagh came in 1963, when 2,500 Armenians signed a petition to Khrushchov asserting that the Baku government, through its KP secretary in Karabagh, the nominally Armenian B. S. Kevorkov,[106] was discriminating against Armenians both economically and culturally. Violence broke out, leaving eighteen Armenians dead, while in Yerevan there was a demonstration at which several Armenians were arrested.[107] Objective evidence of discrimination against Highland Karabagh AP included statistics of Azerbaijan's investment in its territories: in 1970 Highland Karabagh's per capita funding was well below the Azerbaijan SSR average and 47% less than that received by Nakhchavan – Heydar Aliyev's homeland. In 1986 the discrepancy was even greater, as Karabagh received less than half the Azerbaijan average.[108]

Kevorkov, who hated the Armenian Church, was the willing agent of the Baku government. He tolerated no expression of Armenian patriotism in Karabagh, dismissing as 'Dashnak propaganda’ the sensible idea proposed by the Armenian communist Khanzadyan that Karabagh should be linked directly with the Armenian SSR by some rearrangement of borders. Kevorkov also had some of the local Armenian intelligentsia deported. Thus the Armenian–Azerbaijani conflict over Highland Karabagh was brewing long before 1988, and the Moscow government's disregard of Armenian appeals indicated a pro-Azerbaijani bias – which, up to 1982, was scarcely surprising, considering Brezhnev's close relationship with Aliyev, and the importance of Azerbaijan's oil.[109] Clearly any Armenian political demands faced equally rigid opposition from the Baku government and from Gorbachov's ‘reforming’ government in Moscow.

North Caucasus after the mass deportations

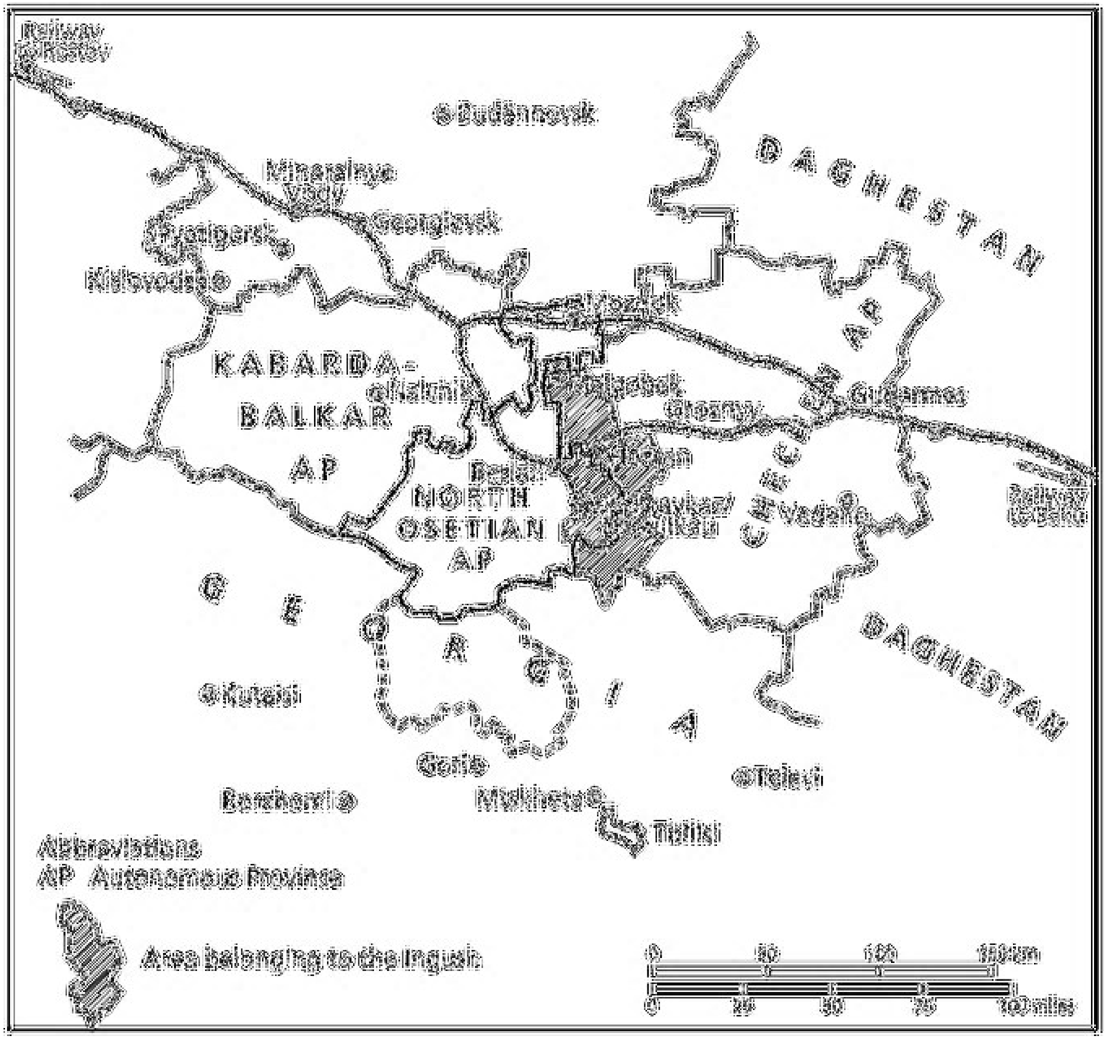
North of the Great Caucasus range the post-Stalin era had dawned over a depopulated and unhappy land. In 1937 the mountainous territories, from the Karachay and Cherkes in the west to Chechenia in the east (omitting Adygeya in Krasnodar province and Daghestan) had had 1,522,626 inhabitants, but by 1945 half of that population had been removed by force. The 777,000 native inhabitants remaining after the war were unevenly distributed. In the centre, around the Russian stronghold of Vladikavkaz (despite being known officially since 1944 by the Osetian name Dzaujiqäu),[110] the North Osetians were almost unaffected by the KP's genocidal deportation; to their west the Kabardans and Cherkes had been depleted by only about 1% of their people, while farther east in Daghestan, although few had been deported to Turkestan or Siberia, many Daghestanis had been expelled from their mountain villages and forced to settle in the lowlands. Farther north, the Kalmyk homeland in the Volga–Manych steppes had also lost a third of its population – the 127,300 exiled Kalmyks. Thus, about 839,000 non-Russian people of the North Caucasus lands were attempting to survive under harsh conditions as NKVD ‘special settlers’ beyond the Caspian in Central Asia. These were not all, however. Even in the 1950s further mass deportations proceeded within north-east Caucasus. In an attempt to redistribute the agricultural workforce, ostensibly in the interests of state planning, some 50,000 people (chiefly Lezgis, Tabasarans, Rutuls and Aguls) were evicted from their mountain villages in south Daghestan and ‘resettled’ in the lowlands near Darband and the Azerbaijan border. An exception were the Lezgis of mountainous Kurush district in the extreme south, who were transported to the north to start a new life in the arid steppe around Khasavyurt, and in 1956 Kurush itself was transferred to Azerbaijan. Further ‘resettlement’ was soon required when the return of the Chechens to their republic in 1957 necessitated the expulsion from its eastern districts of those Avar, Dargo and Andi-Dido communities (c. 50,000 people) who had been moved there 13 years before, and who now must either return to their mountain districts or move out, like the Lezgis, to the Terek lowlands. Chechens who had formerly lived around Aukh (Akka) in Khasavyurt district, however, were not allowed to regain their villages (now occupied by Laks and Avars) but had to settle in that area.[111]

Apart from the bare decree of deportation for the Chechen-Ingush, published retrospectively in June 1946, all reference to them in the press or radio was suppressed by the KPSS's censors until 1956, when Khrushchov delivered a ‘Secret Speech’.[112] A few Chechens had been returning without permission since 1954, when restrictions on their movement were reduced, and 1955 brought a decree ‘On amnesty for Soviet citizens who collaborated with the occupation forces in 1941–1945' – which did nothing to clear the reputation of 'the punished peoples'. However, a decree 'On the restoration of the national autonomy of the Kalmyk, Karachay, Balkar, Chechen and Ingush peoples' was enacted in November 1956, and their official return to their re-established national homelands was accomplished over the next two years.[113]

One of the worst aspects of the deportation of North Caucasus peoples was that libels against them – as whole nations ostensibly guilty of collaboration with the enemy – continued to appear in the communist press and 'scholarly' publications for decades.[114] Persecution of any Chechens who dared to challenge the authorities with claims for restitution of their rights and property began in 1959 when Dziauddin Malsagov, a Chechen lawyer and KP member, was arrested on false charges and sentenced to five years in labour camp, followed by psychiatric prison.[115] One of the periodic reminders that Russia's authorities assumed their right to denigrate nations for supposed collaboration occurred as late as 1988, when a Chechen–Ingush republic KP leader, a Russian, spoke of the Chechens and Ingush as '[our] enemies' who 'stabbed the Red Army in the back'.[116] In the case of the Balkars too (16,000 of whom, one-third of the whole population, had joined the Red Army in 1941) the slanderous accusation of being anti-Soviet 'bandits' made by the NKVD and Kabarda-Balkar ASSR communist leaders in 1941 was shamelessly reiterated up to the 1980s. The relentlessness of such persecution led one of their leaders to write in 1991 that for the Balkars 'genocide still goes on'.[117] The most slandered nationality, perhaps, were the Karachays who – despite their honourable war record of many Heroes of the Soviet Union – were frequently accused in books, newspapers and official KPSS speeches between 1958 and

1983 of treachery and atrocities for which no evidence whatever was presented. Here too their calumniators were Russian and native communists in the provincial government.[118]

From 1944 to 1956 the only 'autonomous' territories of North Caucasus peoples remaining on the map were the Adygey and Cherkes APs, and the Kabardan, North Osetian and Daghestan ASSRs (see Map 27). The recreation of the exiled peoples' territories in 1957 once again altered details on the map, but what was at stake was not only territory, but restitution of the returning peoples' civic rights, and repossession of their homes after 13 years' enforced absence. In places where the Moscow authorities had reallocated territories to other republics, borders had to be redefined, as in southern Ingushia and Chechenia, where the large areas given to the Georgian SSR in 1943–4 were now to be returned to their rightful inhabitants. The return of much territory arbitrarily gifted to Georgia raised other problems, as Georgian settlers had to be evicted and homes found for the Karachays and Balkars in the high valleys. An official history of the Karachay-Cherkes AP states that 'The Russians, Cherkeses, Abazas, Nogays, Osetians and other peoples, side by side with whom the Karachays had lived for centuries welcomed them like brothers',[119] but the reality contradicted these empty words, as conflict arose over ownership of houses and land. The return of the deported peoples was not, as the government plan prescribed, an 'orderly, well-organized and gradual repatriation' spread over several years, with housing, employment and financial credit available. Much of the state funding provided for their rehousing and re-establishment was misappropriated by the Kabarda ASSR's KP leaders, so that the Balkars were left largely to their own devices.


Railway to Rostov
Budënnovsk
DAGHESTAN
Mineralnye Vody
Georgievsk
Pyatigorsk
Kislovodsk
Mozdok
KABARDA-BALKAR AP
Nalchik
Malgobek
Grozny
Gudermes
CHECHEN AP
Nazran
Beslan
NORTH OSETIAN AP
Vladikavkaz/ Dzaudzhikau
Vedeno
Railway to Baku
GEORGIA
DAGHESTAN
Kutaisi
Gori
Telavi
Borzhomi
Mtskheta
Tbilisi
Abbreviations
AP Autonomous Province
Area belonging to the Ingush
0 50 100 150 km
0 25 50 75 100 miles

Map 27 North-east Caucasus boundaries, 1920s–1950s.

All nations returning from exile found their land and villages occupied by Kabardans, Osetians, Daghestanis, Georgians or Russian Cossacks who had moved in from neighbouring territories, but the problem was particularly severe for the Ingush, because the arbitrary adjustments made by the communist government to North Osetia's boundaries created one of the most intractable conflicts in North Caucasus. Since 1944 the Osetians, traditionally ‘loyal’ to Russia, had benefited greatly from the departure of the Ingush, whose whole territory was allotted to them, entailing multiple border changes which radically altered the shape of

North Osetia. Before 1944 it had not possessed any land in the plain north of the Terek, but now it gained a corridor leading to an area of arable land around Mozdok, which became the second-largest town in the North Osetian ASSR. While its western border with Kabarda-Balkaria remained unchanged, that on the east was greatly altered at the expense of over a quarter of Ingushia's territory. The district contiguous with Ordjoniḳidze to the west, known in Russian as Prigorodnyy ('Suburban') district – which had originally contained thirty-nine Ingush villages – was allotted to North Osetia, and Ordjoniḳidze itself, with its mixed Osetian and Ingush population, came wholly under Osetian control. Territorially, Ingushia was compensated for this loss by the addition of a similar area of Chechen territory on its eastern flank, while Chechenia expanded into the plain north of the Terek.[120] Nevertheless, the Ingush were dismayed by Osetian and Russian enmity, as well as the loss of proximity to Ordjoniḳidze and direct access to its educational facilities and employment opportunities. Not only did severe tension arise between the Ingush and the Osetians, but an Ingush demonstration in 1973 demanding the return to them of Suburban district also evoked Russian chauvinist outbursts against both Ingush and Chechens. Worse riots occurred Ordjoniḳidze in 1981, after an Osetian taxi driver was stabbed to death by an Ingush: 20,000 Osetians turned the funeral into race riot, a curfew was imposed, Moscow sent investigators, and the North Osetian KP secretary became the scapegoat for 'failings in inter-ethnic relations'.[121]

The Chechens on their return encountered 'armed resistance by Russians who had apparently decided that they had now become the owners of Chechen territory in perpetuity; often Chechens had to buy back their own homes…and there was no question of retrieving their personal belongings'.[122] According to a report received by the Ukrainian government, in July 1958 Russian mobs in Groznyy yelled ‘Kill the Chechens! Down with the Chechen-Ingush ASSR!’, and many dead and wounded were left on the streets.[123]

The official KPSS cliques of the undeported peoples of North Caucasus – Cherkes, Kabardans, Osetians and Daghestanis – profited from remaining in their home territories as ‘loyal’ peoples, and the favours they received from Moscow confirmed their assumption of superiority – in terms of reflected power – to their poor neighbours returning from exile. The 13 years they had enjoyed without having to consider the neighbours who had apparently gone for ever had been a critical time in Soviet life. Those who had not been deported were integrated into the late Stalinist ethos of rampant corruption and secret-police coercion, whereas the exiles, during their hard life in Central Asia, developed a stoical attitude and preserved a degree of moral integrity which made them superior in spirit to those who had had to compromise all principle under Beria's yoke. Now the deportees had even less reason than before to respect Russians (or Georgians), and many had adopted a proud and contemptuous attitude towards them.

Some Western theorists questioned whether the North Caucasian nationalities possessed any sense of national identity, as opposed to mere linguistic or geographical self-awareness, or perhaps a ‘supra-national’ identification with North Caucasus in general or with Islam. It was said that the Adygeys and Cherkes possessed tribal loyalties, but no awareness of belonging to a (Circassian) nation, while Islam had not influenced them sufficiently to produce an affinity with the Muslim world, so that their only common focus was their anti-Russian feelings. A similar view has been taken of the Karachays and Balkars, although, besides clan allegiance, they may share an awareness of being ‘people of the mountains’ (Turkic *tavlu*, Russian *gortsy*). In the case of the Kabardans, however, nobody seems to doubt their self-perception as a nation among whom, although tribal loyalties had been lost and Islam was not particularly evident, there was a strong traditional culture and a sense of their own worth – and indeed of superiority to their neighbours – which kept them aloof from other nationalities, including the Russians, so that they were unlikely to become assimilated. Even a much smaller Circassian community, the Abazas, apparently retained their national distinctiveness throughout the Soviet period, increasing in numbers and not assimilating to their Karachay neighbours, but continuing to use their own language almost exclusively. As the Osetians, on the other hand, had been mainly Orthodox Christian and pro-Russian for two centuries, a feeling of mutual distrust existed between them and their Muslim neighbours. If this fostered a sense of community among the Christians, the Muslim Osetians of Digoria, on the other hand, ‘feel closer to the Muslim Kabardians than to their Christian kinsmen, the Iron or the Tual’.[124]

No one could deny the sense of nationhood among the Chechens and Ingush, or their marked antipathy towards the Russians, who had subjected them to ignominious eviction and captivity in Central Asia. They also possessed strong clan relations and national traditions, and the powerful unifying force of Islam in the form of Sufi brotherhoods. The most complicated situation existed among Daghestan's numerous linguistic communities which, while sharing many common cultural features, preserved their ethnic differences even in the late twentieth century. One view was that, ‘The Daghestanis are not consolidated into one nation nor are the official ten groups listed in the 1970 and 1979 censuses consolidated as distinct nationalities: each is divided into tribes, clans, free societies and village communities', the importance of which 'is greater than that of any over-arching concept of nationality', such as being an Avar or a Tabasaran. What did exist was the supra-national identity of being mountain people and Muslims, with a degree of xenophobia towards Russians second only to that of the Chechens and Ingush. As a result, 'Daghestani nationalism has a negative rather than a positive, constructive character…It is an opposition of Muslims versus *Kafirs*…based almost exclusively on religion.'[125] Nevertheless, Daghestan's many ethnic communities did possess distinct collective personalities. For instance, because 'political and cultural prestige…is based even today on the part which they played in the holy war', and as Shamil was an Avar, 'the Avars occupy the first rank' as 'the most important Daghestani nationality; formerly the most warlike'. Moreover, it was argued, the Avars, along with thirteen other small communities in Avaristan speaking the inter-related Andi-Dido languages, formed a single ethnic community possessing a common Avar standard language – not that all Andi-Dido speakers necessarily subscribed to this idea.[126]

The Kumuks (the third-largest Daghestani nation) formed two main communities: the northerners, inhabiting the Terek delta plain, shared the distinction of having fought for Shamil's cause, while those in the hills and coastal strip around Buynaksk (formerly Temir-Khan Shura) were formerly the nucleus of the Tarki Shamkhalate, which had sided with the Russians against Shamil. Having lost practically all awareness of clan affiliation, with a high proportion of town-dwellers (c. 50%), and a well-established literary language, the Kumuks were probably the most sophisticated nationality in Daghestan.[127]

Less prestige accrued to the Dargos, since they had participated neither in the Shamil movement nor in the resistance to Bolshevik conquest in 1920–1, and their unification as a people had not gone very far. However, in the eyes of some Lezgis, the Dargos (or ‘the Dargo-Avar-Kumuk power alliance’) were believed to have usurped much of the political power in Daghestan.[128] In contrast with these larger communities, the much less numerous Laks, having been the first adherents of Islam in Daghestan, enjoyed ‘a unique position of cultural and religious prestige’, which was expressed partly in their musical and artistic talents, and had attained greater national cohesion than any other Daghestani people.[129]

A memoir published in 1991 by a Kumuk (whose grandfather had been the first Daghestani to qualify as an engineer in the Russian Empire) evokes some of the calamities inflicted on the peoples of Daghestan in the twentieth century. In central Russia he had been amazed to find Kumuk communities in some of the large towns, and only later discovered how relentlessly the peoples of North Caucasus had been moved around since 1945, to the detriment of their ethnic coherence and culture. Although the Kumuks had escaped mass deportation, the Russian authorities had attempted to ‘erase’ them as a nation by registering young people not by their true nationality, but as ‘Daghestanis’. As speakers of a Turkic language, they had been victimized during ‘the struggle against pan-Turkism’, when ‘the modern inquisitors’ burned old books (in Arabic script), distorted the history of the Kumuks, undermined Islam among them and imprisoned those who performed its rites, with the result that ‘the Kumuks’ highly civilized society was fractured spiritually [and] the disease of profound provincialism set in’ (which, incidentally, describes rather well what happened in Russia too after the revolution). They lost their cultural roots, learning only such ‘history’ as Stalin's *History of the CPSU* contained, and nothing whatever about Kumuk culture. Meanwhile many Kumuks were leaving their settlements, as their fields and pastures were allocated to incomers, until their former homeland, the Terek delta, was left without a single Kumuk district, and only one entirely Kumuk village remained in Daghestan. A continuous stream of mountain folk (mainly Andis who themselves had been registered against their will as Avars) were forced to move down to the Terek plain, where they received Kumuk land, ‘as if it was someone's aim to throw a bone of contention among the local peoples in order to stir up inter-ethnic tension and conflict’. The lives of these displaced people too were disrupted, and in the Kumuk villages the houses they set up were hovels compared with those of the Kumuks. The author's conclusion was that for the previous 70 years Daghestan (like the rest of the USSR) had ‘known nothing but campaigns for one thing or another, and overfulfilling [plans] for something or other. There are no people left, only talk about people. It was only in pre-1917 books that I found anything about the peoples of Daghestan and their beliefs and customs – that is, about normal life’.[130]

The fourth-largest Daghestani nationality, the Lezgis, were in a uniquely unhappy position, being divided by the Daghestan–Azerbaijan border. Formerly the most numerous nationality in Daghestan, they were much reduced between 1946 and 1956, when Moscow transferred areas of Lezgi pasture in the south to Azerbaijan, so that the Avars became the dominant community. While the possibility of the Lezgis’ unification as a nation was actively frustrated by the chauvinist Azerbaijani government, even those living in Daghestan had lost many of their social institutions, including their clans, and, lacking employment in their homeland, they served as a labour pool for industry in Baku. Nevertheless, a cross-border Lezgi intelligentsia existed, which by 1990 organized an active nationalist movement in Daghestan and Azerbaijan. The main historical claim to autonomy made by Lezgis was that their origins went back to the ancient Albanian state, which had been created by Lezgi-speaking peoples in the first century BC.[131]

From the 1960s the Soviet Russian authorities' only wish for the Daghestani peoples was that they should lose their separate identities and become absorbed into the 'Soviet people' as part of its homogenized 'labour resources'. Towards this end, under Brezhnev's (and Lenin's) view of the 'merging' of nations, facts were replaced by self-deception and it was asserted that in Daghestan the number of nationalities 'had been reduced from 58 to 11'.[132]

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[1] S. F. Jones, 'Adventurers or commanders? Civil–military relations in Georgia since independence', in C. D. Danopoulos and D. Zirker, eds., *Civil–Military Relations in the Soviet and Yugoslav Successor States*, London, 1996, pp. 37, 50, n. 12.

[2] Everywhere else (except for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which used the Roman alphabet) the Russian alphabet, with local modifications, had been imposed on all other languages: Matossian, *Impact*, p. 200; Suny, *Making*, p. 305.

[3] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 165–77; Suny, *Making*, p. 285. For an account of the Laz people and biased versions of their history by Turkish and Georgian nationalists, see Bellér-Hann, 'Myth and history'.

[4] *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII, pp. 245–9; Ememi-Yeganeh, J., 'Iran vs Azerbaijan (1945–1946): divorce, separation or reconciliation?', *Central Asian Survey*, 1984, 3, 2, pp. 1–27; Kinnane, *Kurds and Kurdistan*, pp. 45–58; A. Roosevelt, 'The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad', in Chaliand, ed., *People Without a Country*, pp. 135–53.

[5] Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 144–53; R. B. Dobson, 'Georgia and the Georgians', in Z. Katz, ed., *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, New York and London, 1975, p. 186; *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. III, p. 329; E. Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, translated by C. A. Fitzpatrick, London, 1991, p. 201; Suny, *Making*, p. 301.

[6] Matossian, *Impact*, p. 199; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 180, 182.

[7] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 182.

[8] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 161–7; M. A. Ismailov, 'Nauchnaya sessiya v Institute Istorii i Filosofii Akademii Nauk Azerbaydzhanskoy SSR', in Azerbaijan SSR, Akademiya Nauk, *Trudy Instituta Istorii i Filosofii*, vol. VI, Baku, 1955, pp. 247–50; Knight, *Beria*, pp. 18–19, 51, 64–5, 223.

[9] The first-name initial is essential to identify him because in Shi^{c}ah Azerbaijan the surname Aliyev, derived from the martyr ^{c}Ali, is extremely common.

[10] A. Aghanbegyan and Z. Ibrahimova, *Sibir ne ponaslyshke*, 2nd edn, Moscow, 1984, pp. 45–8, 113, 148, 160; Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 164, 165, 166–9, 182–3; E. Fuller, 'The

Transcaucasian republics during the Brezhnev era', *RFE/RL*, 1983, no. 13, pp. 2–3; A. V. Maleshenko and Yu. N. Zinin, 'Azerbaijan', in M. Mesbahi, ed., *Central Asia and the Caucasus After the Soviet Union: Domestic and International Dynamics*, Gainesville, FL, 1994, p. 102; K. Stroyev, *et al.*, *Ekonomicheskaya geografiya SSSR*, 8th edn, 1986, p. 198; I. Zemtsov, *Partiya ili mafiya? Razvorovannaya respublika*, Paris, 1976, pp. 5–6, 10, 58–66, 100, 102.

[11] See, for instance, Suny, *Making*, pp. 280–1, 296–7.

[12] *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. III, p. 350.

[13] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953–5, vol. I, p. 484; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1963, vol. I, p. 295; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Gruziya*, pp. 107, 110, 113, 115, 117–19, 125, 204, 217–19; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, p. 685; Westwood, *Russian Railways*, pp. 283, 303.

[14] Dobson, 'Georgia and the Georgians', pp. 162, 163, 166–7, 182.

[15] Suny, *Making*, pp. 301–2, 304.

[16] The removal of industries from subordination to Moscow and transfer into Georgia's control was significant, when so much of the industry in most other regions was classified as belonging to the military-industrial complex and therefore of 'all-union significance'. This seems to be confirmed by figures showing low percentages of employees in this category in both Georgia and Azerbaijan (8.5% and 7.7% respectively), as well as the Baltic and some other republics, although Armenia had a fairly high figure (17.8%): Horrigan,

B., ‘How many people worked in the Soviet defense industry?’, *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1992, no. 33, p. 35.

[17] Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Gruziya*, pp. 104, 113–14, 116–25.

[18] Dobson, ‘Georgia and the Georgians’, pp. 162–3.

[19] Fuller, ‘Transcaucasian republics’, pp. 3–4; Shevardnadze, *Future*, pp. 24–5; Suny, *Making*, pp. 306, 312.

[20] *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 527; 1989, no. 14, p. 17; S. F. Jones, ‘The Caucasian mountain railway project: a victory for *glasnost'?*’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1989, 8, 2, pp. 49–55.

[21] Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Armeniya*, p. 167; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 123–5. The information in Matossian, p. 125 n. 1a, that it had been opened in 1958 is improbable; but it is shown in *Atlas SSSR*, 1983, p. 42, following a very circuitous route; while the small *Atlas SSSR*, 1988, p. 112, shows it running more directly from Yerevan via Hrazdan, Dilizhan and Ijevan to Akstafa.

[22] G. I. Anokhin, *Malyy Kavkaz*, Moscow, 1981, pp. 21, 123, 124; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953–5, vol. III, p. 64; L. F. Grigorova, *Sevanskiy unikalnyy variant*, Yerevan, 1983, pp. 3–4, 7–8, 15–16, 20–3, 91–2; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Armeniya*, pp. 115–17; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 369, 397.

[23] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo naroda*, p. 397.

[24] Katz, ed., *Handbook*, p. 144; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 399–400.

[25] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 367, 375, 378–9, 407–9; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 184.

[26] Adams, R., 'Millions at risk from Armenian Chernobyl', *Sunday Times*, 26 November 1995, p. 22; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 454; no. 538, p. 11; no. 552, pp. 12–16; 1989, no. 1, pp. 21–2; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 196.

[27] G. E. Schroeder, 'Transcaucasia since Stalin: the economic dimension', in Suny, ed., *Transcaucasia*, pp. 397–416.

[28] Suny, *Making*, pp. 304–7.

[29] Shevardnadze, *Future*, pp. 27–30.

[30] K. M. Simis, *USSR: Secrets of a Corrupt Society*, translated by J. Edwards and M. Schneider, London, Melbourne and Toronto, 1982, pp. 36–9.

[31] G. Mars and Y. Altman, 'The cultural bases of Soviet Georgia's second economy', *Soviet Studies*, 1983, 35, 4, pp. 546–60.

[32] Dobson, 'Georgia and the Georgians', pp. 182–4; Fuller, 'Transcaucasian republics', pp. 6–8; P. Lebanidze, 'Echo of gunshots', *Pravda*, 16 August 1986, p. 6, *CDSP*, vol. 38, no. 1, p. 18; J. W. R. Parsons, 'National integration in Soviet Georgia', *Soviet Studies*, 1982, 34, 4, pp. 558–9; Simis, *USSR*, pp. 34–40, 117–19.

[33] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 197.

[34] Fuller, 'Transcaucasian republics', p. 8; *RFE/RL*, 1984, no. 434, p. 4; Simis, *USSR*, pp. 185–6; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 182–3, 196–7, 200.

[35] Simis, *USSR*, p. 172; Zemtsov, *Partiya ili mafia?*, pp. 11–20, 26–30, 33, 41–2, 68–9, 76–7, 98.

[36] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 166, 168–9, 177–81; Fuller, 'Transcaucasian republics', p. 1; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 38; *The Times*, 12 August 1969, p. 4; 22 October 1987, p. 8; Zemtsov, *Partiya ili mafia?*, pp. 70, 72–6, 83–93.

[37] USSR, Statisticheskiy Komitet Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv, *Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1989 goda*, vol. VII, *Natsionalnyy sostav naseleniya SSSR*, Minneapolis, 1993 (microfiche edition) (hereafter Census 1989, Minneapolis), pt. 2, Table 16; Lemercier-Quelquejay, 'Islam and identity', p. 42. In 1970 the proportion of Russians in Azerbaijan was as high as 28%.

[38] D. S. Carlisle, 'Uzbekistan and the Uzbets', *Problems of Communism*, 40, September–October 1991, p. 30.

[39] B. Z. Rumer, *Soviet Central Asia*, Boston, 1989, pp. 145–50, cited in Carlisle, 'Uzbekistan', pp. 31–2.

[40] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 141; Carlisle, 'Uzbekistan', p. 32; E. Fuller, 'Democratization threatened by ethnic violence', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 34, pp. 34–5; 1990,

no. 41, p. 29; no. 48, p. 22; 1991, no. 1, p. 42; no. 2, p. 24; no. 38, p. 29; no. 39, p. 32; Simis, *USSR*, pp. 35, 78, 109, 113, 167, 172.

[41] Suny, *Making*, p. 311.

[42] Zemtsov, *Partiya ili mafia?*, pp. 87–92.

[43] Fuller, 'Transcaucasian republics', pp. 6–7.

[44] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 169–72; A. Bennigsen, 'The crisis of the Turkic national epics, 1951–1952: local nationalism or internationalism?', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 17, 2–3, Ottawa, 1975, pp. 463–74; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 215–17; Forsyth, *Peoples of Siberia*, p. 377; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, pp. 38–9, 85; Tillett, *Great Friendship*, pp. 104–5, 158.

[45] Tillett, *Great Friendship*, pp. 4–8, 10–11, 15–16, 21, 30–3, 45–9, 145–7, 165–70, 331–5, 387–402. The doubtfulness of the 'Azerbaijani Turkish' nationalist case presented in Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 2–3, 159, 172–4, is demonstrated by its failure even to mention the Armenian case (see 'Artsakh', 'Uttik' and 'Albania' on the map opp. p. 112 in Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*) and the complete omission of 'Armenia' from its index. In general the Azerbaijanis' reworking of the ancient, sparse, evidence about Caucasian Albania scarcely shakes the authority of such scrupulous scholarship as that of C. Toumanoff, *Studies*.

[46] Tekiner, 'Azerbaijan', p. 61.

[47] A. Djavadi, 'Glasnost', p. 98.

[48] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 165–6, 175–6, 186; Yu. V. Bromley, *et al.*, *Sovremennye etnicheskiye protsessy v SSSR*, 2nd edn, Moscow, 1977, pp. 266–7; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 247–8; Tekiner, 'Azerbaijan', p. 63; Zemtsov, *Partiya ili mafia?*, pp. 10, 49.

[49] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 199. See also Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 2–3, 172–4; V. B. Harutyunyan, *Sobytiya v Nagornom Karabakhe: khronika*, pt. I, Feb. 1988–Jan. 1989, Yerevan, 1990, p. 21; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 8, 52–3, 60, 70.

[50] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 190–1.

[51] O. A. Efendiyev, 'K osveshcheniyu nekotorykh voprosov istorii Sefevidov v sovremennoy iranskoy istoriografii', in S. Sumbatzade, ed., *Protiv burzhuaznykh falsifikatorov*, pp. 125–7. In fact, the 'present-day' publications referred to were all published between 1922 and 1931, and the 'Turkish' author whose 1957 work is cited – Zäki Välidi Togan (in Russian Zaki Validov) – was not a Turk but a Bashkort.

[52] See *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI: Roemer, 'Safavid period', pp. 198–200, 340–2; B. S. Amoretti, 'Religion in the Timurid and Safavid periods', p. 619; R. Hillenbrand, 'Safavid architecture', pp. 762–3.

[53] F. M. Aliyev, 'Ob iskazhenii istoricheskoy deystvitelnosti v knige F. Bedli', in S. Sumbatzade, ed., *Protiv burzhuaznykh falsifikatorov*, pp. 58–62.

[54] I. G. Aliyev, ed., *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, pp. 79–81; A. S. Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, p. 237.

[55] Roemer, ‘Successors of Timur’, pp. 107–8.

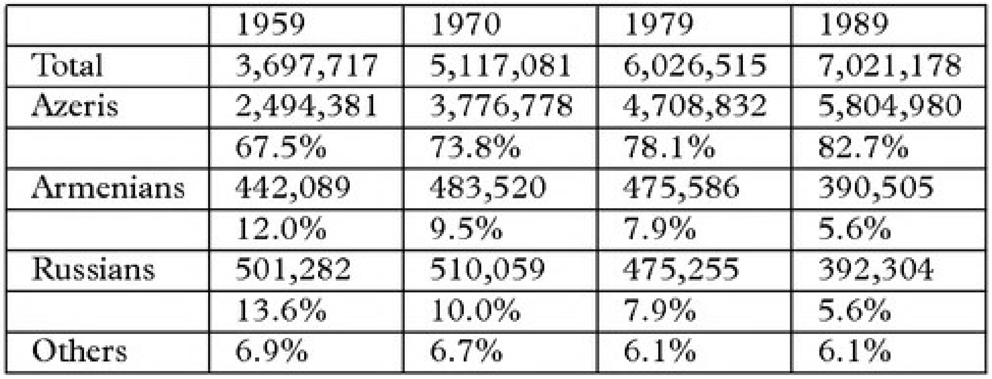
[56] V. Chalidze, *Natsionalnye problemy i perestroyka*, Benson, 1988, pp. 191, 193–4, 196–8; E. Fuller, ‘Azerbaijan's relations with Russia and the CIS’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 43, p. 54; H. Hamzatov, ‘Perestroyka and national consciousness: humanitarian and social aspects’, *Sovetskiy Dagestan*, 1988, no. 6, and A. K. Balammahomedov, ‘Our roots are our languages’, Ibid., 1989, no. 3, both cited in *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 5, pp. 7–8.

[57] *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 10; Chalidze, *Natsionalnye problemy*, pp. 199–205; E. Fuller, ‘Nationalist protest in Georgia’, *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 28, p. 3.

[58] Chalidze, *Natsionalnye problemy*, p. 205; E. Fuller, ‘The Azeris in Georgia and the Ingilos: ethnic minorities in the limelight’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1984, 3, 2, p. 80; Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaydzhana*, p. 34; *Letopis Kartli*, pp. 82–3; M. D. Lordkipanidze and D. L. Muskhelishvili, eds., *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, 8 vols., Tbilisi, 1988, vol. II, *Gruziya v IV–X vekakh*, pp. 269, 271, 273–4; Rizvanov and Rizvanov, *Istoriya lezgin*, p. 5; Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 51–6, 60, 124.

[59] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 105, 205, 297 n. 92.

[60] Population figures for Azerbaijan from *Censuses*, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989, are:



	1959	1970	1979	1989
Total	3,697,717	5,117,081	6,026,515	7,021,178
Azeris	2,494,381	3,776,778	4,708,832	5,804,980
	67.5%	73.8%	78.1%	82.7%
Armenians	442,089	483,520	475,586	390,505
	12.0%	9.5%	7.9%	5.6%
Russians	501,282	510,059	475,255	392,304
	13.6%	10.0%	7.9%	5.6%
Others	6.9%	6.7%	6.1%	6.1%

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[61] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 108, 184–5, 187; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 126; *CDSP*, 1988, vol. 40, no. 9, p. 15.

[62] Chalidze, *Natsionalnyye problemy*, pp. 19–21.

[63] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 188–90; M. Mikailov, 'Azeri journal publishes fable satirizing Russo-Azeri friendship', *RFE/RL*, 1984, no. 182.

[64] V. B. Harutyunyan, *Sobytiya v Nagornom Karabakhe*, part. I, p. 19. The extravagant adulation with which H. Aliyev was regaled is illustrated in Guliyev, *Istoriya Azerbaijana*, pp. 198–231, 283–303, in which Aliyev is mentioned thirty-two times in thirty pages (plus thirty-five times in the appended chronology), quite often by his full name and title – 'candidate member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan comrade Aliyev Heydar Ali Rza ogly'. The only other contemporary KP leader named here so often and at such length was his patron and crony, Brezhnev, who appears thirty-five times in the main text and seventeen times in the chronology. In contrast with this fulsome sycophancy, the

book's writers do not mention any of Aliyev's predecessors in Azerbaijan, nor Brezhnev's predecessor as USSR leader, Nikita Khrushchov; even the name of Stalin does not appear once, nor is there any reference to the KPSS Terror.

[65] A. Vaksberg, ‘Ethics and the law: STORMY APPLAUSE’, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 21 September 1988, in *CDSP*, 1988, vol. 40, no. 47, pp. 19–20.

[66] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 180, 192, 194, 197; *The Times*, 22 October 1987, p. 8; S. E. Wimbush, ‘Why Geidar Aliev?’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1983, 1, 4, pp. 1–7; Maleshenko and Zinin, ‘Azerbaijan’, p. 102.

[67] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 155, 163; B. Wilhelm, ‘Moslems in the Soviet Union 1948–1954’, in Marshall, *et al*., eds., *Aspects of Religion*, pp. 265, 269–71.

[68] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 12, 16, 17.

[69] Lemercier-Quelquejay, ‘Islam and identity’, pp. 45–9.

[70] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 140–3; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, pp. 116, 126–9; Lemercier-Quelquejay, ‘Islam and identity’, p. 39; Wilhelm, ‘Moslems’, pp. 273–5, 280–1.

[71] Lemercier-Quelquejay, ‘Islam and identity’, p. 48.

[72] *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1986, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 7; 1987, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 15; vol. 6, no. 5, pp. 12–13; *RFE/RL*, 1985, nos. 303, 334.

[73] Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, p. 156.

[74] *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. III, pp. 126, 276.

[75] Khutsishvili, *Tbilisi*, pp. 62, 86, and accompanying map; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 264–5, 275; Suny, *Making*, pp. 302–3.

[76] Dobson, ‘Georgia and the Georgians’, p. 184.

[77] J. B. Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, Princeton, 1983, pp. 66–7; Suny, *Making*, pp. 258, 282, 289–90, 308–9.

[78] Bloch, S. and P. Reddaway, *Russia's Political Hospitals: the Abuse of Psychiatry in the Soviet Union*, London, 1977; *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1974, no. 15, p. 27; 1975, no. 17/18, pp. 26, 40, 45, 46; 1976, no. 19, p. 26; 1977, no. 26, pp. 5, 22; no. 28, p. 7; Fuller, ‘Transcaucasian republics’, p. 9; *RFE/RL*, 1984, no. 129, p. 3; J. Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights*, London, 1981, p. 242; Suny, *Making*, p. 309; *The Times*, 6 January 1994, p. 10.

[79] Fuller, ‘Transcaucasian republics’, p. 10.

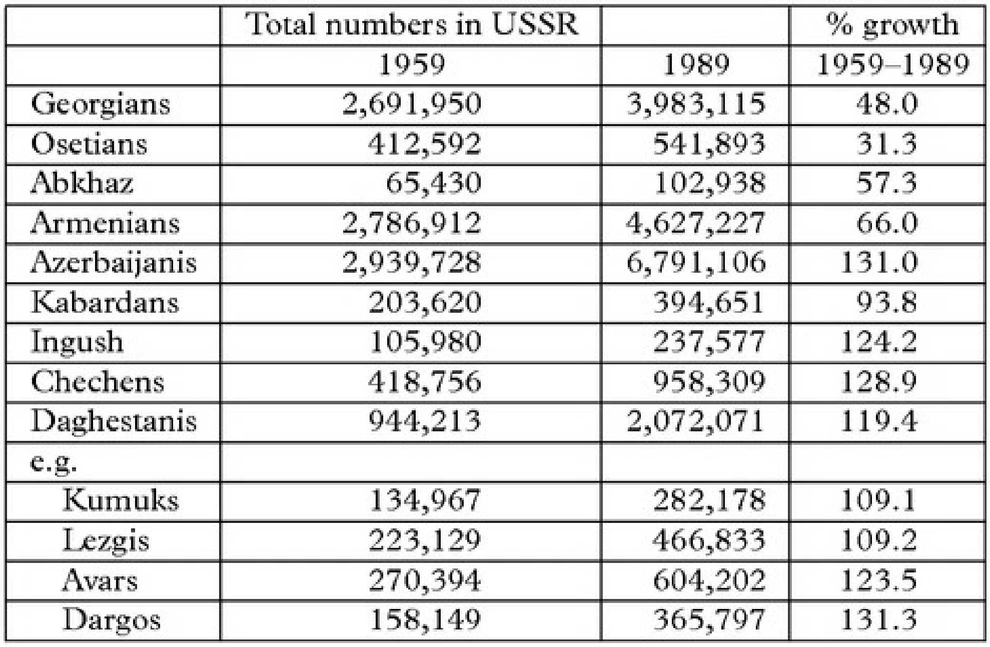
[80] *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1978, no. 30, p. 25; 1980, no. 40, p. 28; Fuller, ‘Transcaucasian republics’, p. 9; E. Fuller, ‘Ideological alienation of youth in Georgia’, *RFE/RL*, 1983, no. 453, p. 2; Guruli and Vachnadze, *Istoriya Gruzii*, pp. 157–8; B. G. Hewitt, ‘Aspects of language planning in Georgia (Georgian and Abkhaz)’, in Kirkwood, ed., *Language*

Planning, p. 133; Parsons, ‘National integration’, pp. 556–7; *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 13; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 331–2; Suny, *Making*, pp. 309–10.

[81] E. Fuller, ‘Georgian officials condemn recent nationalist demonstration’, *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 13, p. 1; E. Fuller, ‘Georgian Komsomol congress calls for more effective ideological work with youth’, *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 188, pp. 2, 4; Fuller, ‘Ideological alienation’, p. 4; S. F. Jones, ‘Religion and nationalism in Soviet Georgia and Armenia’, in P. Ramet, ed., *Religion and Nationalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe*, 2nd edn, Durham, NC, 1989, pp. 186–7.

[82] Dobson, ‘Georgia and the Georgians’, p. 182; T. Dragadze, ‘Family life in Georgia’, *New Society*, 19 August 1976, pp. 393–5; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 97; Parsons, ‘National integration’, pp. 556–7; Suny, *Making*, pp. 300, 304. Other minorities in Georgia in 1979 included Azerbaijanis 5% and Armenians 9%, as well as Osetians and Abkhazians, who had their own ‘autonomous’ territories: S. F. Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, in Bremmer and Taras, eds., *Nations and Politics*, p. 289.

[83] Percentage growth of peoples of the Caucasus according to Censuses of 1959 and 1989:



	Total numbers in USSR		% growth
	1959	1989	1959–1989
Georgians	2,691,950	3,983,115	48.0
Osetians	412,592	541,893	31.3
Abkhaz	65,430	102,938	57.3
Armenians	2,786,912	4,627,227	66.0
Azerbaijanis	2,939,728	6,791,106	131.0
Kabardans	203,620	394,651	93.8
Ingush	105,980	237,577	124.2
Chechens	418,756	958,309	128.9
Daghestanis	944,213	2,072,071	119.4
e.g.			
Kumuks	134,967	282,178	109.1
Lezgis	223,129	466,833	109.2
Avars	270,394	604,202	123.5
Dargos	158,149	365,797	131.3

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[84] Fuller, ‘Georgian Komsomol congress’, p. 5; E. Fuller, ‘Popular Georgian writer advocates minimum of six children per family’, *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 349, pp. 1–3; E. Fuller, ‘Why the bouquet for the Georgian Party organization?’, *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 331, p. 4. At 17.7 births per 1,000, Georgia's rate was indeed lower than the USSR average of 18.3, and was small compared with such republics as Kazakstan with 23.8 or Tajikistan with 37, but was well above others, e.g. that of 14 in Latvia, 15 in Estonia and 14.8 in Ukraine: USSR, Gosudarstvennyy Komitet po Statistike, *Naseleniye SSSR 1987: statisticheskiy sbornik*, Moscow, 1988, pp. 127–43.

[85] D. M. Lang, *The Georgians*, London, 1966, pp. 27–8.

[86] Fuller, ‘Ideological alienation’; Fuller, ‘Georgian Komsomol congress’, pp. 1–4; E. Fuller, ‘The good, the bad, and the ugly: religious survivals and popular tradition in Georgia’, *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 316; E. Fuller, ‘Ten Georgians sentenced for protesting against celebrating bicentennial of

Russian–Georgian Treaty', *RFE/RL*, 1984, no. 129, pp. 1–4; Jones, 'Religion and nationalism', p. 192; S. F. Jones, 'Statement by M. Bagdavadze', *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 312, p. 6.

[87] *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1974, no. 15; 1976, no. 25; T. Gudava and E. Gudava, 'Georgia: a historical survey of the Georgian national liberation movements', *Nationalities Papers*, 1989, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 230–1; Jones, 'Religion and nationalism', pp. 177, 178, 180, 183–4; Lang, 'Religion and nationalism', p. 179; Melia, 'Georgian Orthodox Church', pp. 229–30, 232–6; Parsons, 'National integration', pp. 563, 569.

[88] Corley, 'Armenian Church', pt. 1, pp. 14–24, 34–6, 45; Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 160–2; Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, pp. 220–1, 234–5; Krikorian, 'Armenian church', pp. 248–53; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 166–7; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 359, 365–6, 417–21; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 159, 167–71, 224, 226; C. J. Walker, ed., *Armenia and Karabagh: the Struggle for Unity*, London, 1991, pp. 10–11.

[89] Corley, 'Armenian Church', pt. 2, pp. 289–98; Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 168–70; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 288–9; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, pp. 12–13.

[90] Corley, 'Armenian Church', pt. 2, pp. 294–5, 305–9, 315; Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 168, 173–4; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 226–7; Josephine Forsyth's personal observation.

[91] *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1980, no. 39, p. 6; no. 40, p. 19; Corley, 'Armenian Church', pt. 2, pp. 313, 315, 318, 321–2, 335.

[92] Bloch and Reddaway, *Russia's Political Hospitals*; *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1979, no. 35; 1980, no. 38; Corley, 'Armenian Church', p. 2, pp. 309–10, 321–2, 325–7, 329–31.

[93] Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 167–8; L. Mikirtitchyan, 'Armenian literature', in G. N. Luckyj, ed., *Discordant Voices: the Non-Russian Soviet Literatures, 1953–1973*, Oakville, Ontario, 1975, p. 13; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 373; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 159–60, 180.

[94] Kolarz, *Religion*, pp. 168, 173–4; Matossian, *Impact*, pp. 201–2; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, p. 383; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 181, 226–7.

[95] Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, pp. 373–85.

[96] R. Ananikyan, *Yerevan: a Guide*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 64–5, illustrations between pp. 48 and 49; Fuller, 'Transcaucasian republics', p. 13; Hotham, *The Turks*, pp. 112–13; Grigoryan and Stepanyan, *Yerevan*, pp. 91–5, 119; M. K. Matossian, 'Armenia and the Armenians', in Katz, ed., *Handbook*, p. 158; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 181, 186, 195, 228.

[97] *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1974, no. 11/12, p. 47; 1977, no. 25, p. 32; no. 28, p. 24; 1980, no. 38, p. 31; Fuller, 'Transcaucasian republics', p. 10; Matossian, 'Armenia and the Armenians', pp. 158–9; Mikirtitchyan, 'Armenian literature', p. 25; *RFE/RL*, 1983, no. 13, p. 10; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 187, 227–8.

[98] Armenia's population also included 5.3% Azerbaijanis, 2.3% Russians and 0.7% other nationalities, including 50,000

Kurds: Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 127.

[99] *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1979, no. 35, p. 21; 1980, no. 38, pp. 5–6; E. Fuller, 'Armenian writer deplores preference shown for Russian language in republican education', *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 230; Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents*, p. 228; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 184, 187.

[100] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 190.

[101] *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1980, no. 39, p. 6; no. 40, p. 19; 1981, no. 42, p. 14; 1982–3, no. 48, p. 41; *RFE/RL*, 1982, no. 192, p. 3.

[102] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, vol. I, p. 660; Lang, *Armenia*, p. 23; Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*, pp. 42–3, 50, map opposite p. 112; Sumbatzade, *Azerbaydzhantsy*, pp. 51–5. Considerable disagreement exists among scholars on these questions: see N. Dudwick, 'The case of the Caucasian Albanians: ethnohistory and ethnic politics', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 1990, vol. 31, no. 2/3, pp. 377–84.

[103] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, map opp. p. 16.

[104] Census 1989, Minneapolis, vol. VII, pt. 2, p. 484; N. Dudwick, 'Armenia: the nation awakes', in Bremmer and Taras, eds., *Nations and Politics*, p. 274; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. XXII, p. 705.

[105] Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 217.

[106] The surname Kevorkov derives from the Armenian forename ‘George’: Kevork or Gevorg, according to dialect.

[107] Census 1989, Minneapolis, p. 498; Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, p. 274; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 195; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, p. 118.

[108] Harutyunyan, *Sobytiya v Nagornom Karabakhe*, pt. 1, pp. 21–2.

[109] *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1977, no. 28, p. 24; Corley, ‘Armenian church’, pt. 2, pp. 323–4; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 188–9, 195; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, p. 120.

[110] ‘Dzawag's village’, according to Minorsky, *Turks*, item VI, *Caucasica* III, ‘The Alan capital *Magas and the Mongol campaigns’, p. 237.

[111] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 324–5; Ibrahimov, ‘Narody Dagestana’, pp. 116–17.

[112] Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. 147; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 87–8.

[113] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, p. 188; I. L. Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. II, p. 297; Bugay and Mekulov, *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 167–8; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 135–6; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 341–2; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 241–2; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, p. 284.

[114] Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 166–72, 185–8.

[115] Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 64–7.

[116] *Groznenskiy rabochnyy*, 26 January 1988, quoted by R. I. Khasbulatov in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 17 June 1988. Even this faithful Leninist and Russified Chechen, who had never lived in Chechenia, was offended by this blanket accusation of his people as anti-Soviet 'bandits': see Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, pp. 338, 345.

[117] Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. II, pp. 175, 294–5, 296–7, 302.

[118] A. Sheehy, 'Justice at last for the Karachai?', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 52, pp. 17–18.

[119] *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 343.

[120] A. B. Dzadziyev and L. K. Gostiyeva, editors, *Severnaya Osetiya: etnopoliticheskiye protsessy 1990–1994 gg.: ocherki, dokumenty, khronika*, vol. I, Moscow, 1995, pp. 21–2. See maps in: Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, p. 662; Lorimer, *Population*, map XVI, opp. p. 151; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 119; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, vol. VIII, p. 630; vol. IX, pp. 214, 490.

[121] J. Birch, 'Ossetia: a Caucasian Bosnia in microcosm', *Central Asian Survey*, 1995, 14, 1, pp. 52–4; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 149–61, 181–6; 'Soldiers quell riot in Russia', *Observer*, 20 November 1981, p. 51.

[122] Usmanov, *Nepokoryonnaya Chechnya*, p. 84.

[123] Some 2,500 rioters were said to have been imprisoned for their part in the atrocities: *Ferment in the Ukraine*: *Documents by V. Chornovil, I. Kandyba, L. Lukyanenko, V. Moroz et al.*, edited by Michael Brown, New York and Washington, DC, 1971, p. 104.

[124] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 160, 195, 200, 203, 206. The number of Abazas, according to various sources, is rather unclear for the 1922–41 period, viz. 1926 – 13,800 (Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 286), 1937 – 13,802 (*Census*, 1937), 1939 – 15,300 (Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 286; figure from the skewed 1939 census). Thereafter *Census* figures were: 1959 – 19,600, 1970 – 25,448; 1979 – 29,497; 1989 – 33, 801.

[125] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 166, 180–1.

[126] Atayev, *Avartsy*, pp. 9–14; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 166–7; Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 197, 199.

[127] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 169–70; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 421–2.

[128] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 342–51, 369, 374.

[129] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 167–8; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 502.

[130] Adzhiyev, ‘I snova “kumyk o kumykakh”’, pp. 90, 93–6, 102–3.

[131] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 27–36, 58–64, etc.; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 168; Rizvanov and Rizvanov, *Istoriya lezgin*.

[132] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 324, 325; Adzhiyev, ‘I snova “kumyk o kumykakh”’, p. 94; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 160; Bryan, ‘Internationalism’, pp. 210, 218; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1986, vol. 5, no. 5, pp. 4–5.

16 Caucasia from Stalin's death to the 1980s (2)

Ethnic minorities in South Caucasus

Armenians formed the largest ethnic minority in Azerbaijan, but many other, smaller communities existed in the South Caucasian republics. In Armenia there were, apart from the 93% Armenian majority, many Azerbaijanis, Kurds and Russians, and smaller communities of Assyrians and Greeks.[1]

Far more nationalities existed as minorities in Azerbaijan, the largest community being Armenians (7.9% of the population), but until 1989 they were mostly 'concealed' in order to maintain the impression of an ethnically homogeneous nation-state. As an Armenian writer reported, since the 1970s the Azerbaijani KP leadership

> had entirely ceased to oppose manifestations of…pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism in their republic. Nationalism had intensified, especially among the intelligentsia, and violence dominated inter-ethnic relations. Assimilation – the Azerbaijanization of the Talysh, Kurds, Tats and other ethnic minorities – was in full swing…Russians and Armenians had begun to leave the republic. [And] these negative trends developed while propaganda trumpeted…ideological clichés about the 'flourishing' and 'merging' [of nationalities].[2]

In the 1979 census, apart from many Russians and Armenians and smaller numbers of Jews, Tatars and Ukrainians, the only other Caucasian nationalities listed in Azerbaijan were Daghestanis (Lezgis, Avars and Tsakhurs), Tats and Udins. The 1989 census, however, acknowledged several more Caucasian minorities, including Talysh, Turks, Georgians, Kurds and Laks, while the Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan had increased to 5.8 million (83%).[3]

Georgia had a similarly varied population, with considerable numbers of Armenians, Russians, Azerbaijanis and Greeks; the indigenous communities of Osetians and Abkhazians; and smaller groups of Kurds, Jews (including ‘Georgian Jews’, who were largely assimilated to the Georgians), Assyrians and others;[4] only the ‘Turks’ of Meskheti continued to languish in exile in Central Asia.[5] Shevardnadze founded a Georgian Council for Co-ordination and Development of Inter-ethnic Links, one of the responsibilities of which was to create cultural facilities for Georgia's minorities, especially Greeks and Azerbaijanis. By 1983, however, the large Azerbaijani minority living in Marneuli district were complaining of the inadequacy of their cultural facilities.[6] Three of Georgia's larger minorities enjoyed nominal autonomy in territories bearing their names, even if they did not now form the majority of the population. These were: the Acḥarian ASSR around Batumi, in which Acḥars formed 39% and Georgians 44% of the population; the South Osetian AP with 66% Osetians and 29% Georgians; and the Abkhazian ASSR, in which the 93,300 Abkhazes were by 1989 reduced to a minority of only 18% of the population, with 239,900 Georgians outnumbering them by more than 2:1, while Armenians and Russians had more than 14% each.[7] By the 1980s the Abkhazians were showing signs of unrest because of the ever-increasing element of Georgian immigrants in Abkhazia's population.

The Georgians themselves made up 70% of their SSR's population, but the convenient simplicity of the name ‘Georgian’, *kartveli*, was misleading. They had been registered under this collective name since the 1939 census but, despite the efforts made by the Moscow (and Tbilisi) governments to achieve ethnic homogeneity, their regional and linguistic divisions and loyalties persisted. Of the 3,800,000 ‘Georgians’ in the republic in 1989, some 82% were Kartli-Ḳakhetians of the eastern regions, but there were 13% Megrelians, 4% Acḥars and 0.7% Svans in the west.[8] The Megrelians and Svans had their own languages distinct from Georgian, and different, west Caucasian, traditions, while the Acḥars, whose language was essentially Kartli-Ḳakhetian, differed in religion, being Sunni Muslims.[9] As long as the rigidity of the Brezhnev régime persisted, these Transcaucasian ethnic differences and grudges were suppressed, but they were waiting to assert themselves as soon as the dead hand of KPSS despotism was lifted.

Historiography and national cultures; Shamil

By the 1980s the North Caucasus region had developed an impressive network of educational institutions. Rostov-on-Don had a university, founded in 1915, Vladikavkaz Polytechnic Institute was founded in 1918 and Groznyy's Oil Institute in 1920. Other colleges for teacher training and local industries were founded before the Second World War, and the universities of Makhachkala, Nalchik, Ordjoniḳidze, Krasnodar and Groznyy were opened between 1957 and 1972.[10] All these institutions had to play their part in the Communist Party's perversion of scholarship during the ideological attacks mounted after the war against the Turkic epics. In north-western Caucasus legends describing the fantastic feats of warrior giants called Narts, who defied God and the angels until destruction by fire from heaven, formed part of an oral tradition shared by all native peoples from the Abkhaz and Adygs in the west to the Ingush in the east,[11] which had been collected and published since the nineteenth century. In the 1940s the recording of texts in Osetia, both North and South, received most official encouragement. For publication they were edited or rewritten in a spirit of 'political correctness', as stories created by the 'people' to express condemnation of tyrants, and the just rebellion of the masses against their rule. The Osetian versions of the Nart legends were presented as national epics on a par with the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Kalevala*, describing how many generations had 'waged a persistent struggle for a happy future and love of liberty'. Notwithstanding their entirely fantastic events, the Nart legends were said to be 'realistic' and even 'historical', ostensibly reflecting the way of life of the assumed ancestors of the Osetians – the Alans and Scythians – when they lived in the steppes before moving into the mountains. These expressions of popular imagination were dubbed 'an encyclopedia of early Osetian life',[12] despite the fact that the Karachays and others also claimed the Alans as their forefathers and the Narts as their epic heroes. It was not until much later that genuine scholarly publication of Nart texts was resumed in Kabarda-Balkaria and elsewhere.[13]

Meanwhile the historiography of peoples of north-west Caucasus was being warped by Soviet Russian political dogma, so that discussion of their origins became extremely tortuous, taxing the ingenuity of Soviet historians even after the 1950s, when KPSS congresses supposedly 'liberated historical scholarship from rote and dogmatism and facilitated the development of creative thought'.[14] Among the tacit conventions that prevailed was general agreement that Caucasian languages, especially Georgian (being, according to N. Ya. Marr's Old Testament classification, neither Hamitic nor Semitic, but 'Japhetic'), were good, as were their speakers. The Russians and their language were, however, best, whereas Turkic (now usually Islamic) peoples were viewed negatively as destructive nomadic hordes and 'Asiatics'. To support such historical assumptions, much use was made of archeology to 'prove' the location and cultural level (in terms of Marxist 'stages of development') of a given people at any period. Attempts were thus made to reconcile the present-day locations of, e.g., the Circassians, Karachay–Balkars and Osetians, with their rival claims to precedence, based on the 'facts' of history, ethnic affiliation and origins – which were often extremely scanty. Another political dogma which had to receive at least lip service was the ubiquitous 'friendship of peoples' of the USSR (excepting those to whom inferior status was automatically accorded as peoples declared guilty of war-time treachery to Russia).

On these premises something like the following account of the origins of the peoples of north-west Caucasus and the Kuban steppe prevailed: (1) the Circassians were autochthonous Caucasians who up to the tenth century AD occupied the territory between the Black Sea and the Kuban; (2) some Alans (Osetians) – Iranian-speakers from the steppe – had by then settled in the plain and valleys east of the Laba; (3) waves of Turkic nomads – in the sixth and seventh centuries, Bulgars; in the eleventh century, Kypchaks – also settled east of the Circassians; (4) in the thirteenth century the Mongols arrived and drove both the Alans and the Kypchaks into the mountains where in the highest valleys the Alans became assimilated to the Kypchaks in language, thus forming the Balkar–Karachay people.[15] As we have seen, the secondary role attributed to the Turks in this narrative had already provoked a rival ethnogenetic theory in Azerbaijan.

Communist censorship prevented any mention of the most conspicuous event of the twentieth century in North Caucasus: the eviction and deportation of 800,000 of its native citizens. In histories of these peoples written between the 1950s and 1980s, factual details about what happened were minimal or absent and – far from assessing the human suffering caused by mass deportation, or confessing that this was a massive injustice, the topsyturvy picture presented by the KPSS's ideologists was reduced to four bland doctrinal statements: 'Leninist principles of nationalities policy were violated' (1943–4) or 'restored' (1956); 'the decisions of the 20th KPSS Congress [1956] were implemented'; 'the autonomy of these peoples was reinstated' (1957–8); and 'the KPSS and Soviet government gave enormous help with reconstruction'.[16] As nobody made explicit what the 'Leninist principles' were, why and how they had been 'violated', or what required reconstruction, these allusions were nonsensical. Deportation as such was not even named in the Chechen-Ingush, Balkar and Karachay histories.[17] No moral judgment on the state's actions was ever offered, and the question of who was to blame for these crimes against masses of Soviet citizens (Stalin? Beria? or – perhaps – the Communist Party?) was studiously ignored. Many accounts feebly made amends for the savage abuse of innocent people by mentioning the contribution to the Soviet war effort made by soldiers of all these nations (at the very same time as their families were evicted and deported) and especially the large number of medals awarded to them for heroism.[18] Only the Kabarda-Balkar history fails to include this, while on the other hand (like that of the Karachay) perversely mentioning supposed collaboration of ‘bourgeois-nationalist elements’ with the German invaders.[19] An honourable exception to this catalogue of evasively distorted writings was an *Outline History of the Kalmyk ASSR*, which provided a comprehensive treatment of all essential topics, including the various regions of Siberia and Kazakstan in which the Kalmyks were dispersed, the extremely hard conditions they had to face, and the serious disruption this caused to their education and life in general.[20]

The grandest theme for historical fudging or ‘reassessment’ in North Caucasus was a much older one: Russia's campaign of conquest in the nineteenth century. The author of a study of KPSS propaganda about ethnic relations in the Soviet Union suggests that one of the main aims of the party's dictates to historians was to promote Leninist nationalities policy ‘by rewriting the history of the Russian Empire in such a way as to reduce friction and violence among its peoples… and to emphasize the positive results of Russian empire-building’. He concludes that ‘What emerges is a kind of historic commonwealth of peoples, fated by history to a common struggle which reached its victory in the October Revolution’, and he describes the result as ‘an elaborate historical myth’.[21] While this description is appropriate, the underlying motives it implies are perhaps too subtle for the Russian Communist Party. The principal intention of its rewriting of history was to destroy the existing historical consciousness of the subject peoples by discrediting their national heroes as an inspiration of patriotism, and to replace these with the myths of Marxist-Leninism and the cult of ‘the great Russian people’.

Among most peoples of North Caucasus the greatest hero was Imam Shamil. He became a target of communist vilification during the Second World War, at first by omission rather than explicit attack: at a time when Russian historical heroes (and even the Ukrainian Bohdan Khmelnytskyy) were being lauded in mass editions, ‘the works of the non-Russian writers about their heroes were turned out in small editions and not reprinted’, and among these the one most conspicuously avoided was Shamil. After the war, minimal acknowledgment of Shamil as a popular hero was succeeded by direct denigration. The ideological attack on his reputation – staged as a controversy between historians – was part of the rewriting of history in a spirit of *Russian* patriotism after M. Pokrovskiy's impersonal class-based history was discredited in the mid 1930s. The war had brought a respite, but in 1945 the KPSS instituted a new doctrine on history, among the dogmas of which were that ‘the annexation of territories to Russia, regardless of the circumstances, was to be regarded as a historically progressive phenomenon’, and that the ‘friendship of peoples’ making up the USSR must be the dominant motif in the histories of its non-Russian peoples. In the light of this ideological dogma all existing histories had to be revised, and ‘corrected’ accounts produced in an ‘internationalist’ spirit. This particularly affected the history of Ukraine, Kazakstan and North Caucasus. In the case of Shamil, not only the former hero's class allegiance but also the Islam which he stood for was denigrated, so that from being ‘a talented and energetic leader…a hero and maker of heroes’, embodying a ‘new, revolutionary muridism…the *avant-garde* of the revolutionary petit-bourgeoisie’, Shamil suddenly became an unpopular ‘reactionary’, and his *murid*ism was, among other vices, naively said to be ‘in the service of British capitalism and the Turkish Sultan’.[22]

This crude campaign of denunciation against Shamil became the special realm of M. Baghyrov during his last years as Azerbaijan's first secretary, and the trite 'reinterpretations' he penned in an article in *Bolshevik* in 1950 'hardened into precise formulas immediately, and would be rehearsed hundreds of times in the new histories [of non-Russian peoples]'.[23] After parading his ponderous clichés in Moscow, Baghyrov took them to Baku, where his presentation before the local intelligentsia evoked a servile demonstration of 'self-criticism' from all those present (except Heydar Huseynov who, unfortunately for him, had recently published a book praising Shamil as a patriot and 'lover of the people', and *murid*ism as a 'liberation movement'). Communist leaders in Daghestan and Kabarda likewise joined in the chorus of condemnation of Shamil.[24] The Thaw in the intellectual sphere after Stalin's death allowed historians some flexibility for a time, but KPSS ideologues swiftly reasserted orthodoxy in 1957, and there were practically no new publications about Shamil until 1966. In Daghestan, indeed, 'not a single book on history was reported out of [Makhachkala]' in 1966–9, and such news as did leak out of Daghestan – the least accessible part of the Caucasus so far as information was concerned – suggested (euphemistically) that 'the historians of Daghestan have… been subjected to unusual coordination measures'.[25] It was no accident that the period of Moscow's denigration of Shamil coincided with the growth of clandestine Sufi brotherhoods in Chechenia-Ingushia and their spread into Daghestan, bringing an introspective reconsolidation of the principles which Shamil *had* stood for and a tendency to shun Russian infidels with their ideological interference.

Meanwhile 'scholarly', communist-inspired, reassessments continued in the USSR's various Institutes of History, and it is significant that the new line of attack which emerged in the 1970s–80s was initiated by an Osetian historian, M. Bliyev. Attempting to impose order on the differing dates cited by historians for the ‘assimilation’ of the North Caucasian countries to the Russian Empire, he formulated a two-stage ‘process’. From the sixteenth century onwards, these peoples supposedly became ‘politically incorporated’ into Russia's empire through ‘peaceful contacts’ followed by their requesting to become subjects of the tsar and swearing oaths of allegiance. This constituted ‘voluntary adherence’ or ‘incorporation’ into the empire.[26] The second stage occurred when, from the late 1820s, the Russian government imposed its military-administrative system by armed force throughout North Caucasus, subjugating areas which had previously joined themselves to it ‘voluntarily’ and turning them into colonies (note that this date disregards the first half-century of Russia's anti-Circassian war, which began in 1763).[27] On this basis Bliyev asserted that the Ingush and Chechens ‘voluntarily joined’ the empire in 1762 and 1781 respectively – a century earlier than had generally been accepted – and finally became administratively its ‘subjects’ at the end of the Caucasian War in 1859. These ideas were echoed by a historian in Daghestan in 1989: ‘Is it right to talk about “colonialism”…with reference to Russia's presence in North Caucasus from the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century, when Russia was simply engaged in the administrative assimilation of territories, many of which had already become Russian subjects voluntarily?’[28] Far from recognizing the struggle of the North Caucasus peoples under Shamil as a popular movement for liberation from Russian oppression, such historians, steeped in the myth that ‘assimilation’ by Russia was automatically a ‘progressive’ development, even recommended that teachers should speak about ‘the *so-called* Caucasian War’. This view enjoyed official support in Russia, as the basis of a reinterpretation of North Caucasian history which shamelessly attributed ‘expansionist, aggressive actions’ and ‘reactionary policies’ not to the Russian government and imperial army, but to the tiny Ingush, Chechen and Daghestani nations who, supposedly, caused the war by their raids on Georgia and Osetia. It was not until the late 1980s that Daghestani, Chechen and Ingush scholars had an opportunity to refute this absurd fabrication and to vindicate Shamil and his resistance movement.[29]

The Russian communist authorities wilfully ignored the fact that, like it or not, Islam, and specifically Sufism, retained a profound influence on the peoples of north-eastern Caucasus, and that the beliefs hallowed by Shamil were still central to their view of the world. After the 1944 deportation all mosques in Chechenia-Ingushia were closed or put to other uses, and even after the exiles returned in 1958 none were reopened for 20 years. However, many clandestine unofficial prayer-houses were founded, and many Muslims used the tombs of heroes of the anti-Russian wars as places of congregation for prayers.[30] The KPSS may have expected that these harsh experiences and plenty of anti-religious propaganda would destroy the Ingush's and Chechens' faith, but this was to reckon without their toughness, integrity and determination to preserve their culture. In exile their convictions – and hatred of Russians – had only strengthened: 'far from destroying the Sufi brotherhoods, the deportation actually promoted their expansion' – even among the Kazaks of Central Asia. Nor did Khrushchov's anti-religious campaign of the 1960s affect them greatly, since mosques were not crucial for the existence of Sufism: believers formed small religious communities based on families, the men (sometimes including local Soviet officials) meeting together in the guest room of a village house to sing traditional songs in Arabic, discuss local events and pray. Such informal gatherings, common among the Daghestanis, Chechens and Ingush, reinforced clan and *murid* community ties and customs, and regulated all aspects of spiritual life, as private family matters beyond the supervision of the Soviet authorities. Thus an informal but tight social network existed, reflecting the clan (*taip*) and tribe (*tukhum*) institutions which were still alive in these societies, as were such customs (long prohibited by Russian law) as bride-price, polygamy and blood-vengeance.[31]

Manifestations of this illegal ‘parallel Islam’ in North Caucasus, frequently reported from the mid 1960s onward, included not only private gatherings, but public ceremonies such as funerals, which remained predominantly religious. Sometimes these became considerable demonstrations, as with the funeral of a revered Chechen *murshid* of the Batal Hajji brotherhood which was attended by more than 1,000 people.[32] In the 1980s this branch of Sufism was particularly popular in Ingushia, whence it spread to Daghestan, the Digor Osetians and Kabarda-Balkaria. There was also a growing number of places of pilgrimage, such as the graves of Sufi saints and martyrs, including Turkish and Arab soldiers who had fought against Soviet rule.[33]

Sufism was also widespread in Daghestan, where more than seventy saints’ tombs enjoyed popularity. By the 1970s the revival of Islam here increasingly came into conflict with Soviet ideology, especially among young people and the intelligentsia. The Soviet assumption that the technical and professional intelligentsia which the state had educated would gratefully devote itself to serving the ends of its benefactor was disappointed here, as elsewhere. In the late 1980s more than 50% of Daghestan's population subscribed to the beliefs and rituals of Islam, and general disillusionment with the ‘norms’ of Soviet life, accompanied by growing ‘religious and nationalist tendencies’ – especially refusal to submit to military conscription during the USSR–Afghanistan

War (1979–89) – could be attributed to the Sufi brotherhoods.[34]

Even Daghestan's official press began to acknowledge current trends. While the republic's *Kommunist* periodical continued to publish anti-religious articles up to 1987, the more popular magazine *Soviet Daghestan* (from 1988 entitled *Our Daghestan*) included many frank articles about the history and present state of the republic, and objective information about religious beliefs and history in place of articles condemning the evils of Islam.[35] Daghestan was said to have some 95,000 *murid*s, with fluctuation in the popularity of the various brotherhoods. As in Chechenia-Ingushia, many Sufi centres possessed unofficial Muslim schools, even in such centres as Makhachkala and Darband, and there were more modest institutions in smaller towns and villages. These semi-clandestine schools were an essential part of Daghestani life, even though by the late 1980s several official mosques had been opened. An exceptional fact in Daghestan was that knowledge of Arabic had survived, or had been revived, so that it was observed in mosques that many men could still follow Koranic texts. The recent use of Arabic was also evident in cemeteries, where many new tombstones bore inscriptions in Arabic.[36] It has been said that by 1987 signs of Islam were so omnipresent in Daghestan, Chechenia and Ingushia that the communist authorities felt ‘bewildered and helpless’,[37] particularly in view of Moscow's continuing defeats in the Afghanistan War and the general growth of Islamic fervour in Asia.

West of Ingushia it appeared that Western predictions of the spread of Sufism and Muslim militancy were somewhat exaggerated. Ordjonikidze, standing between the Muslims of eastern and western Caucasus, was a bastion of Russian and Christian institutions. On the other hand, the 30% of Osetians who were Muslims (the Digors) tended towards the Kabardans, who had once been their overlords. From here westwards into Circassia and mountainous Karachay-Balkaria there was relatively little Sufi brotherhood activity, and few places of pilgrimage.[38] In the late 1950s some Kabardans and Cherkes were known to maintain old social traditions associated with Islam – observing Ramadhan, having bride-price and polygamy, practising bride abduction, and keeping their women in purdah – but during subsequent decades these customs gradually gave way to the norms of Soviet Russian society. Nevertheless it was believed that 'Respect for elders, sobriety and, above all, an overwhelming sense of superiority are some of the factors that protect the Kabardians from any cultural or biological assimilation by the Russians.'[39] In the early 1980s there were only a dozen functioning mosques in Kabarda, Cherkesia and Adygeya, but 'Russian' Stavropol province with its very mixed population (including 42,300 Cherkes, 30,400 Abazas, 6,500 Kabardans, 142,700 Karachays, 28,600 Nogays and 6,100 Kumuks) had twenty new mosques and many old ones. Islam was also strong among the Karachay–Balkars of the mountains, where there were fewer mosques, but a thriving network of the Qadiriya brotherhood existed.[40]

Communist government and indigenous opposition

One ostensibly successful aspect of the KPSS's 'Leninist nationalities policy' was the preservation of the languages of the non-Russian peoples in their designated territories. By the late 1980s the Caucasus came second only to Central Asia for its high degree of retention of native languages, with about 99% of the inhabitants of its non-Russian territories claiming to use their national language as the mother tongue. The highest figures of all were for Armenian, Georgian, Azerbaijani, several Daghestanian languages, Ingush and Chechen. However, a high degree of national-language retention by a territory's native inhabitants did not in itself guarantee the survival of the language. In terms of another indicator of ethnic survival – the ratio of indigenous inhabitants to Russians – the ‘Transcaucasian’ SSRs had exceptionally high ratios, even exceeding those in Central Asia: in Armenia there were 58 Armenians to 1 Russian; in Azerbaijan 15 to 1; and in Georgia 11 to 1. The North Caucasus peoples had lower native-to-Russian ratios, ranging from Daghestan's 8:1 to Karachay-Balkaria's 1:1. The lowest levels of indigenous nationality representation occurred in the Abkhazian ASSR and Adygey AP: despite the fact that in Abkhazia the native inhabitants were outnumbered 2.5:1 by Georgians (Russians were not the problem here), while Adygeya, isolated amid the Russian–Ukrainian sea of Krasnodar Province, had 3.3 Russians to each Adygey, both territories maintained high national-language retention rates – Adygeys 98.4% and Abkhazians 97.3%.[41]

Nor did relative numerical strength and a high percentage of native-language retention necessarily guarantee resistance to Russification, since they could be undermined by political factors applying to all non-Russian communities, such as legislation on parental choice of the language of education, and the use of the local language in official contexts. Under Beria's dictatorship in Georgia, all non-Georgian schools, including those in the Abkhaz ASSR and South Osetian AP, were closed down. In 1953 the teaching of both languages was reinstated, but the following year the Abkhazians and the South Osetians (preferring the risk of Russification to Georgianization) changed their alphabets from Georgian to Cyrillic. This had the positive effect of bringing South Osetia into line with North Osetia, but in Abkhazia it produced a 47-

letter alphabet less well adapted to the sounds of the language than the Georgian alphabet had been.[42]

In the 1960s Moscow's measures to downgrade indigenous cultures in many non-Russian territories was accepted enthusiastically in North Osetia, where Russian became the language of teaching from the first year in rural primary schools, creating a whole generation of Osetians ignorant of their native language and culture. All newspapers in Osetian were discontinued, and official business at all levels was conducted exclusively in Russian. Even in Daghestan local languages were downgraded, especially in towns, where Russian enjoyed greater prestige, so that in Makhachkala no teaching whatever of Avar, Dargo or Lak went on. Meanwhile in Adygeya by 1979 not a single school or class in the Adygey language was offered.[43] In Kabarda-Balkaria a Balkar wrote:

> We saw pupils from local schools…rejecting their native language even as a subject of study, let alone as the language of instruction, as had been recommended by the republic's Ministry of Education ‘as an experiment’ in rural schools. Two generations brought up out of touch with their native language is a factor we must reckon with. It was we ourselves who raised these rootless people.[44]

Despite this wilful neglect of native languages in schools and the strong emphasis on Russian, by the early 1980s Russian remained strictly a medium for school and business, and few natives of North Caucasus except the Osetians spoke it fluently. This attitude has been convincingly explained in terms of the Muslims’ conviction that the Russians, notwithstanding their technical skills and literary culture, had shown themselves by their behaviour in North Caucasus to be essentially barbarians, and the native peoples felt themselves to be 'culturally superior because of their superior religion…even though poor, they feel morally superior to the Russians', and accordingly kept aloof from them.[45]

In Daghestan the tide turned in favour of the native languages in the late 1980s, with a general awareness among the intelligentsia that their cultural survival was threatened by the economic and political developments of recent years and the dominance of Russian. A specific dimension of the Daghestanis' linguistic situation was their realization that with the abolition of Arabic they had lost not only contact with their religious beliefs, but also a useful lingua franca in their multi-ethnic homeland.[46] Similarly even the North Osetians now combined their allegiance to Russian with a revival of their own language: in 1980 it was reintroduced as a subject of study for 2–3 hours per week; then in 1989 as the language of instruction in primary schools and a subject of study in all secondary classes.[47]

The political awareness and activity which emerged in North Caucasus in the late 1980s had to challenge provincial governments consisting of entrenched communist functionaries, none of whom were chosen by local election, but were appointed directly by Moscow. A Daghestani politician recalled, as one of 'many examples of lawlessness', how in 1945 his republic's leadership had condemned corruption by local government and KPSS officials in the collective farms of one district. As a result, the whole KP district committee was dismissed, along with the first secretary, soviet committee chairman, procurator and NKVD chief. However, when 'new leaders were sent to our district from Makhachkala…[they were installed] without any election…[as was the new] executive committee chairman…[who,] naturally, was not one of our district deputies, but someone sent from Makhachkala. This was a gross infringement of KPSS regulations and the Daghestan ASSR Constitution', but such arbitrariness in the communist system was as much a matter of course in Daghestan as everywhere else.[48]

Nor were economic failures exclusively caused by corruption: in Daghestan there was much sheer bungling in economic planning because of the 'administrative-command system', which frequently imposed absurd schemes. After 1945, for instance, when Stalin's government resolved that Daghestan's lowlands should become a cotton-growing region, 'cotton was forced upon our republic from above…without taking account of climate…[or the fact that] the republic did not yet have…a developed irrigation system'. Consequently, cotton yielded low harvests or simply perished from lack of rain. 'But any order from above must be carried out, so [cotton] monopolized all the attention of the farms, the officials and the administration…[while] grain and livestock production…were neglected…abandoned.' After creating havoc with collective-farm finances and the peasants' livelihood, the misguided cotton-growing experiment proved such a failure that in 1952 Daghestan's leaders persuaded the KPSS Central Committee to abandon it.[49]

KPSS rule – with its concomitant, the stifling of dissenting voices – appears to have been particularly firmly established in Daghestan, its vested interest being consolidated by a peculiarly Daghestanian infiltration of 'local tribal (*tukhum*) power',[50] especially on the part of the Avars, Dargos and

Kumuks. It is therefore not surprising that most stirrings of dissidence which occurred, such as the desire for greater autonomy and religious freedom expressed by some mullahs and members of the intelligentsia in 1977, were easily suppressed.[51]

By then, however, things were beginning to change in North Caucasus as a result of various economic and demographic developments. In North Osetia, for instance, the creation in 1959 of an electronics industry and expansion of the established ferrous metals industry were criticized because, as anyone who visited the upper Fiagdon gorge could see, they had created an environmental slum and, as local ore resources soon ran out, they had to rely on imported raw materials, while the mining industry was resented because it caused 'mass importation of labour'.[52] However, as the number of Osetians in the republic increased by more than half between 1959 and 1989, and their share in the population increased from 48% to 53%, while the number of Russians steadily decreased after 1970 as a proportion of the total (from 40% to 30%), Russian workers were not responsible for the change in the ethnic balance. As Osetians and Russians still constituted more than 80% of the republic's population in 1989, the only nationality showing a big increase were the Ingush, who since 1959 had grown fivefold (from 6,100 to 32,800) and fourfold as a proportion of the population: 1.3% to 5.2%.[53] North Osetia now had the highest population density of any non-Russian republic in the USSR (77 persons per square kilometre) and was the most urbanized territory in the whole Caucasus region, second only to Rostov province. It was also highly industrialized, and was the North Caucasus territory with the highest proportion of employees in military industry subordinated directly to Moscow.[54] Relatively few Osetians were employed in industry, where most workers were Russians, while not only were more Osetians engaged in trade, but they also held the highest proportion of top posts in administration and management. Even if, as Osetian patriots complained, the supreme post of KP secretary in the republic was always held by a Russian, he always had an Osetian or other non-Russian deputy and an exclusively Osetian entourage.[55]

In contrast with Osetia, the Chechens and Ingush (along with the Daghestanis) were the least urbanized of North Caucasus peoples, and remained rural, traditional and strongly Islamic. Chechenia-Ingushia was also potentially the most rebellious republic, with an uneasy balance between a native population fiercely resentful of its nineteenth-century subjugation and recent deportation, and a local Russian administration convinced that Chechens were ‘bandits’ and that Chechenia was Russian territory, containing oil resources which were indispensable to the Russian state. Before the development of the Volga–Ural field, Groznyy's oil production had been second to that of Baku, and although it was small it remained important because of its high-quality light crude, suitable for aviation fuel. For Moscow this consideration outweighed all others, including harmonious ethnic relations. Measures taken by local officials supposedly to ease the reintegration of exiled Chechens and Ingush into the republic's society were at best inadequate, and the accompanying insincere propaganda asserting the ‘friendship of peoples’ was repugnant. Another ethnic change resulting from the deportation were 77,000 Daghestanis and Osetians who had been brought into Chechenia to occupy villages vacated by the exiles, and whom it was not easy to evict when the Chechens returned. Similarly, Ingush returning to Ordjonikidze's Suburban district strove in vain to repossess their homes, which were now occupied by Osetians.

Gradually some Chechens and Ingush were recruited for Groznyy's industrial workforce, but because their education had been neglected in exile, few gained promotion. In the cultural field, according to a Chechen writer, under Brezhnev's rule ‘The degree of colonial oppression was intensified and the policy of Russification…was stepped up. All mosques and ethnic schools were closed, and the activities of Chechen and Ingush cultural societies were severely restricted…Legal obstacles were even created against their obtaining domicile in [Groznyy,] the capital of their own republic.’[56] Ingush demonstrations had occurred there and in Ordjonikidze in the 1970s and 1980s over their loss of Suburban district, and protest of a different kind occurred in 1985, when conscripts undergoing military training in Astrakhan, principally Chechens, mutinied on hearing that they were to be sent to Afghanistan, where they would have to kill Muslims; this anti-war protest was crushed by armed force.[57] According to Chechen scholars, Russian communists never forgave the Chechens and Ingush for their readiness to join Shamil's fight for freedom, even though this had happened a century earlier. The malice and suspicion evoked in Russian chauvinists by the memory of these events were bequeathed to the next generation of local communists, who resented the return of the Ingush and Chechens from exile and hated even to hear them conversing in their own languages. It is therefore not surprising that, in the words of a Chechen writer, the local Russian or Russified native leaders, ‘who held total power here’, were determined to prevent any concessions to the Chechens and Ingush:

> the restoration of Chechenia-Ingushia's autonomy… was merely a formality. In reality this was still Russia's ‘Groznyy province’, with the same people calling the tune as before. This had never been a secret to the Chechens and Ingush, and obviously it could not continue. This is the land of the Vaynakhs, and it must be run by those to whom it belongs by historical right.[58]

A new development among the Ingush and Chechens which would have surprising consequences in the late 1980s was that ‘during their exile in Kazakstan [they] had turned into trading and entrepreneurial peoples…[since] the Soviet authorities had allowed them a certain degree of economic freedom…and…private ownership of land, houses and cattle’. The combination of these opportunities and ‘the highly organised structure of Chechen and Ingush society’ through clans and *murid*ism, subsequently enabled them to become important operators in the USSR's ‘second economy’, with a widespread network in many Russian towns.[59]

Demography and national movements: Daghestan

Since 1953 the ethnic pattern had changed throughout North Caucasus, as the numbers of the native peoples grew, while Russians declined both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the population. For instance, the Chechens and Ingush in their republic increased threefold, and their share in the population grew from 41% to 71%, whereas Russian numbers declined from 49% of the total to 23%[60] as thousands emigrated from the 1970s onward because of ‘the xenophobia of the local population’.[61]

In Daghestan these years saw much economic development, as more than fifty new industrial enterprises opened, hydroelectric power stations were constructed and roads upgraded. Some of this useful work was negated in the late 1960s by earthquakes in mountainous areas in the south, which served as a pretext for moving more of the population down to the Terek lowlands and Darband.[62] A high proportion of Daghestan's industrial employees (35.1%) worked in the military sector subordinated directly to Moscow, and many of these were Russians.[63] Multiple transfers of population since 1924 from the mountains down to the lowlands had resulted in a jumbled ethnic distribution in Daghestan. The ostensible intention of these movements was to relieve pressure on the meagre resources of the mountain areas and provide landless people with land – especially in the infertile lower Terek steppe.[64] Thus by the 1980s ‘The mountains [had] lost their population, while the plains became increasingly overpopulated’, putting unwelcome pressure on the resources of the original lowland communities of Nogays and Kumuks, and ‘intensifying not only demographic, but…also economic, ecological and other social problems’.[65] So long as the Nogays were nomadic and practically autonomous under Stavropol's provincial administration – as they had been before 1917 – all the pastures of the ‘Nogay steppe’ were at their disposal. However, numerous territorial changes by the Moscow government had divided up the steppe between Stavropol and Astrakhan provinces, Chechenia and Daghestan, irrespective of ethnic differences or custom. By 1989 only those Nogays remaining in Daghestan had a national district; elsewhere much of their land had been taken over by Russian and Dargo settlers. As such incomers had better employment prospects than the Nogays, and treated them with contempt (while importing crime to an area where it had hardly existed before), the Nogays in the late 1980s started to campaign for an autonomous national territory and the revival of Nogay language and culture.[66]

Among other Daghestani peoples showing signs of self-assertion were the Avars: in 1988 their national theatre company planned a production based on L. N. Tolstoy's story *Hajji Murat*, but this was banned because it might stir national passions. The first Daghestani community to form patriotic associations were the Kumuks, with Vatan (Homeland) in 1988 and Tenglik (Equality) in 1989; the Lezgis were second with Sadval (Unity) in 1989.[67] Here, unlike in Chechenia-Ingushia, the demographic balance was already weighted against the Russians, although the multiplicity of Daghestan's peoples told against unity. Taken together, Daghestan's indigenous peoples accounted for 69% of the population in 1959, increasing to 81% in 1989, and their absolute numbers almost doubled, from 736,000 to 1,461,000. Meanwhile the Russian element decreased by 22%, from 214,000 to 166,000, and this exodus increased considerably in subsequent years.[68]

The most constant and persistent case of suppression of a specific nation in the second half of the twentieth century was that of the Lezgis. In the extreme south of Daghestan the Lezgis and neighbouring peoples speaking related languages formed a compact community of 316,500. However, as we have seen, they differed from the rest of Daghestan because they represented only one-half of the Lezgi nation, of whom a further 300,000 (or, as some claimed, 670,000)[69] lived in Azerbaijan. The division dated from 1860, when the Russian government arbitrarily created new provinces in place of the previous Küra, Kuba and Shaki khanates, placing the border between Daghestan and Baku provinces along the river Samur, which bisected Lezgi territory. This disadvantaged Daghestan and in particular the Lezgis, as their ethnic territory extended north to Darband – which the Azerbaijani government coveted, and in which several thousand Azerbaijanis lived. Since the Bolshevik government's decision in 1920 not to reunite the Lezgis within one ‘autonomous’ territory was so inconsistent with their policy of granting territorial self-determination to all nationalities, this capitulation to Azerbaijan's demand is comparable with their similar favouring of Baku's claims to Armenian territory, or because of traditional Georgian antipathy towards ‘Lekis’ (Lezgis) on the part of Stalin, Orjonikidze and Beria.[70] Within the Azerbaijan SSR the population of the Lezgi region suffered particular discrimination from 1936 onwards, especially in education and through the abolition of official status for the Lezgi language. All non-Azerbaijani residents of the Azerbaijan ASSR, including Lezgis who had been born there, had to pay the Azerbaijani authorities a ‘settlement tax’ up to the 1960s, and those desiring access to higher education had to make a single payment of ‘Lezgi money’ or else re-register themselves as Azerbaijanis. Thus because of Azerbaijan's petty-imperialist pretensions many Lezgis underwent assimilation and enjoyed no rights as a nationality in Azerbaijan.[71]

In Lezgistan questions of ancient history assumed political significance in the late 1950s, when Azerbaijan's nationalists began to claim early Caucasian Albania as the cradle of the Azerbaijani people – contrary to the historical evidence that Albania was the predecessor of Lezgistan. Their case is at least as well founded as that of the Azerbaijanis, since the Lezgis have most obviously occupied the region throughout recorded history. The claim that Albania was established by the Lezgis, or at least by a Daghestanian people including Lezgis – but *not* by the Armenians or Azerbaijanis – is supported by the Chechen historian Ibrahim Aliroyev. The defiance of the Lezgis in this matter makes their relations with the Azerbaijani nationalists tense – but, because of Baku oil, Azerbaijani opinion carries infinitely more weight in Moscow.[72]

Lezgis had been demanding the abolition of the Samur frontier and the reunification of their territory since the 1920s for practical reasons. Traditionally, 'the northern districts of present-day Azerbaijan and the southern districts of Daghestan had formed a single economic region – a livestock-rearing complex containing over a million head [of sheep and goats]'. The Daghestanis had access to winter pastures in the Shahdagh mountain region which was now in Azerbaijan, while residents of the latter shared summer pastures with local people in the mountains of southern Daghestan.[73] This situation was confirmed by a USSR decree in 1945, but in 1950, during the corrupt régime of Beria and his Azerbaijani counterpart, M. Baghyrov, Moscow suddenly abolished the Daghestani stock-farmers' right to transhumance in Azerbaijan, only 40 miles distant. Instead, the Lezgis were assigned winter pastures 450 miles away, north of the Terek in the 'black lands' of Kalmykia (two months' travel each way for drovers and flocks!). This played havoc with the animals' seasonal breeding patterns and quickly led to a steep decrease in their numbers, involving great economic loss. Such politically induced muddle about Daghestanian pastures was not limited to the Lezgis, but penalized them most, especially when, in 1955, those living in two southern districts had to surrender their winter pastures to Georgian shepherds, receiving in their place land in Azerbaijan's Mughan steppe, 200 miles to the south, which the Georgians had rejected as unprofitable. The fate of the Lezgis of Kurush in the southern mountains was particularly intolerable, as they were forced to move north to

Khasav-yurt region in 1950, and the land that had been theirs was transferred to Azerbaijan.[74]

The Lezgis became one of the worst cases of ethnic persecution by the highest state authorities during the last decades of the USSR's existence. Since all requests for reconsideration of their problems were ignored by the Azerbaijani government and the Russian authorities, in 1960 they formed a cross-border society to campaign for their rights. Its leaders succeeded in obtaining an Azerbaijanian KP resolution (1963) to provide the republic's Lezgian inhabitants with education and a newspaper in Lezgian, but as the government did nothing to implement this, Lezgi national culture continued to be eroded.[75] Even within Daghestan Lezgi activists received little comfort. During the 1960s–80s their leaders, headed by the writer Iskander Kaziyev, were persecuted by the KGB in the usual ways: in 1968 Nadir Abduljamalov was arrested, ostensibly for financial speculation, Mavlud Ahmedov received the first of several terms in psychiatric prison, and Kaziyev himself, after criticizing A. D. Daniyalov (who had been chairman, then first secretary, of the Daghestan ASSR for more than 20 years) for his anti-Lezgi policy – was accused of slander, deprived of his living as a writer and deported to a mining village in Ukraine. In 1981 through collusion between the Moscow and Baku authorities, Kaziyev and his family were sent to live in Sumgayt, where they lacked any means of earning a living, and Kaziyev soon died.[76] Further malicious collusion between the KPSS leadership and the KGB occurred in the 1970s, when several Lezgi students in Daghestan wrote to Heydar Aliyev, pointing out the discrimination suffered by Lezgis in Azerbaijan, the need to have their language taught in schools and to include programmes in Lezgian on the republic's media. The letter, passed by Aliyev to his KGB, was forwarded to the Daghestan KGB, and the students – R.

Rizvanov, M. Sadykov and G. Ahmedov – were expelled from Makhachkala university for ‘national egoism’ and ‘unhealthy conversations’.[77] Another example of the Communist Party's secret-police activity far from the cities of central Russia was the case of the Lezgi mathematician, Vazif Meylanov, who was arrested in 1980 for writing a defence of free speech, circulating ‘forbidden literature’ and protesting against the persecution of Andrey Sakharov. Meylanov was sentenced to seven years’ hard labour plus two years’ exile, and spent over 500 days in solitary confinement for refusing to perform ‘corrective labour’.[78] Despite such persecution, the Lezgis in Azerbaijan continued to make fruitless appeals to the Baku and Moscow governments for autonomy and the unification of their divided communities, while in Daghestan their national movement became organized in 1989 under the name Sadval.[79]

Demography and national movements: North Caucasus

In Kabarda-Balkaria, like in North Osetia, the main extractive industry was in the high Caucasus, where the quarrying of molybdenum and tungsten ore at Tyrny-auz in the Balkar region, 10,000 feet above the Baksan river, had gouged mountainsides and left hills of noxious slag clogging the gorges. In the Terek plain this mining industry was supplemented by electronics factories and engineering works in the Kabardan capital, Nalchik, which also possessed a meat-processing works and the biggest confectionery factory in North Caucasus.[80] Meanwhile livestock herds had been restored after depletion during the Second World War (their third decimation since the Bolshevik coup), and cattle farms and horse studs throve on rich pastures in the lower valleys and foothills of Kabarda.

For the Balkar shepherds, however, life had been hard after their return from exile to their mountain pastures. Thirty years later, no government investment had gone into the Balkar economy and, indeed, when they showed initiative in supplementing their meagre livelihood by making and selling woollen garments (as did the Karachays), they suffered interference and obstruction by Nalchik bureaucrats. It was particularly galling that during the Balkars' absence in Central Asia exile skiing and other tourist facilities had been developed near Mount Elbrus, with new roads leading up to them for the benefit of KP leaders and other privileged groups, while the Balkars' mountain villages remained inaccessible except by rough tracks. Refusing to accept absorption into collective farms in the lowlands, the returning Balkars (and Karachays) demanded their mountain homes back from Russian and other squatters, who then also suffered, since the USSR never had any spare accommodation.[81] However, earlier land rights were invoked, going back to before the Bolsheviks' irresponsible abolition of property and law in the 1920s. A 1991 law on the rehabilitation of the banished peoples required that the sites they had occupied before 1944 must be returned to them, but the Kabardans (who had owned very large estates before the revolution) then demanded the return of lands which had been assigned to Balkars and Karachays in 1922.[82] By 1989 Kabardans and Balkars made up 48% and 9% of the ASSR's population respectively, the second largest ethnic group being Russians.[83]

Similar stirrings of national awareness surfaced among the Karachays of the Karachay-Cherkes AP during the 1980s, when the bitter experience of the deportation inflicted on them by the Soviet Russian state made them assert their rights as a nation (and raising the problem of the similar rights of their neighbours, the Circassians, Abazas, Nogays and Russians, with whom they shared their province, and who were also adapting themselves to more democratic conditions). In 1988 the Karachays created Jama^{c}at (the Community), an organization demanding the cessation of libels against them, full rehabilitation in respect of their war service and unwarranted deportation, autonomy in their own national territory, and wider scope for the Karachay language in education.[84]

The Circassian peoples – Abazas, Abkhaz, Adygeys, Cherkes and Kabardans – played a more active part in the general rebirth of national consciousness than their reticence hitherto would have suggested. The very first national organization for the renascence of national culture and history – Adyge Hase (Adyge Gathering) – was formed in 1988 by the Adygeys, who at 95,000 accounted for only 22% of the population in their AP in Krasnodar province, where Russians and Ukrainians constituted 71%. However, Russian antagonism towards the natives was latent here too, and the latter had not forgotten the atrocities committed a century before, as the Adygey writer N. Kuyok revealed in the Russian periodical *Friendship of Peoples*. He resented the existence of a Cossack *stanitsa* bearing the name of General Zass, notorious for his cruelty and habit of collecting the severed heads of Circassians. The Adygeys also protested against the seizure of plots of land in their territory for the building of holiday centres by Krasnodar organizations. Although the Adygeys were often dismissed as ‘a mere 100,000 people’, Kuyok pointed out that even a nation so few in numbers as theirs was worthy of respect and that, together with the Kabardans and Cherkes, they formed a single Circassian people totalling more than half a million, who ought not to be divided, but united as one nation. This was not a popular idea among Russian residents in Adygey territory, some of whom alleged that nationalist activism might destabilize the political situation on the Kuban – although the Adygeys appealed to all concerned, including the Kuban Cossack Rada, to avoid inter-ethnic friction.[85]

Patterns of ethnic distribution throughout North Caucasus were affected not only by natural population changes and the Russian state's arbitrary relocation of communities, but also by uncontrolled migration on a considerable scale between various territories, particularly in the 1980s. Some of these migrations began when communities deported from North Caucasus were allowed to leave their places of exile and return to their homes or seek other havens. Georgia was particularly vindictive towards the ethnic groups it had expelled, and refused to accept the return of most of the Meskhi Turks, Armenian Muslims (Khemshins), Kurds, Azerbaijanis and Greeks whose former homes were in Georgia, but now formed a floating population in and around the Caucasus. Another numerous category in North Caucasus were economic migrants, including Chechens and Daghestanis facing overpopulation and pressure on land, of whom ‘In recent years an ever increasing number…have been travelling beyond the borders of their republic as seasonal workers, and some do not return.’[86] As a result, by 1989 even the rather uninviting environment of Kalmykia was home to over 20,000 Daghestanis (6.4% of Kalmykia's population) made up of Dargos, Avars, Kumuks, Rutuls, Lezgis and others, while the Kabarda-Balkar republic had many German, Crimean Tatar and Meskhi refugees.[87]

Thus arbitrary deportation and repatriation had caused significant changes in the distribution of peoples before the Gorbachov era. Thereafter, once the Azerbaijan–Armenian war over Highland Karabagh began in 1988, some 160,000

Azerbaijani refugees left Armenia, and a similar number of Armenians fled from Azerbaijan, many of them heading farther afield, including North Caucasus, in search of places of refuge. So far as the Russian contingent in the native territories of North Caucasus was concerned, since the 1960s the general trend in North Osetia, Chechenia-Ingushia and Daghestan was clearly downwards, both in numbers and as a percentage of each republic's population, whereas to the west, in Kabarda-Balkaria and Karachay-Circassia, the number of Russians increased, but their percentage in the population shrank. In Adygeya, although the number of Russians consistently rose, their percentage remained around 72%. The total decrease of 115,594 Russians in the three eastern territories was more than balanced by their increase of 221,819 in the western territories.[88]

Apart from the native territories of North Caucasus, the ‘Russian’ provinces of Stavropol, Kuban and Rostov were also affected by population movements: amid the general population growth in the USSR between 1959 and 1989, the percentage growth rate for Russians was below the average. As it was the non-Russian peoples that were increasing, many Russians drew exaggerated conclusions with racist overtones, suggesting that the increased immigration of Dargos, Chechens, Nogays, Greeks and Armenians from their national territories was ‘threatening the stability’ of the north-west Caucasus provinces and the security of the Russians in their population. However, as the size of the non-Russian communities was tiny in comparison with the dominant Russian contingent, this could not be taken seriously. In 1989 the population of Krasnodar province was 5 million, 85% of whom were Russian (almost 90% if Ukrainians and Belorussians are included); Rostov province had 4.3 million, almost 90% of whom were Russian (with another 5% Ukrainians and Belorussians) which gave Slavs an overwhelming majority over indigenous peoples. Stavropol was slightly different, as its 2,800,000 inhabitants included a somewhat smaller contingent of 81% Russians and other Slavs, and a significant number of non-Russians whose ancestors were native to that region before the Russian invasion: 142,700 Karachays, 42,300 Circassians, 30,400 Abazas, 28,600 Nogays and 6,500 Kabardans – but even these taken together totalled only 9% of the province's population. In Krasnodar and Stavropol provinces, on the other hand, the indigenous population maintained a higher growth rate than the Slavs between 1959 and 1989, ranging from 52% in the case of the Adygeys to 106% for the Karachays; greater still was the increase in Armenian numbers – between 133% and 183%; while in Stavropol province Chechens increased by 240%, and Daghestanis by almost seventeen times, with Dargos in particular increasing fivefold. The numbers involved in each case were relatively small, e.g. in 1989 some 33,000 Dargos, 15,000 Chechens and 72,500 Armenians, but the cumulative effect, as perceived by the multi-million Slav majority in these three provinces, was easily imagined to be greater.[89]

Abkhazia

Twentieth-century Abkhazia's place, not among the peoples of South Caucasus – and especially not subordinate to Georgia – but as part of North Caucasus, was asserted long before Gorbachov's reforms, as the Abkhaz began to re-establish their ethnic links with their neighbours, the Circassians. Their perception of Russians, however, was less negative than that held by many Adygeys, Cherkes and Kabardans. Abkhazian recollections of autonomy stretched back to the separate Soviet republic they had enjoyed in 1921, before Stalin brought them under Tbilisi's domination. They also believed that the Georgians Stalin and Beria in their plans for ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the Caucasus had considered adding the Abkhaz to the list of peoples for deportation in 1944. So far as religion was concerned, Moscow reasserted Abkhazia's separation from North Caucasus and subordination to Georgia by placing Abkhazian Muslims incongruously under the authority not of the Islamic Directorate for North Caucasus and Daghestan, based in Makhachkala, but of the Transcaucasian Directorate, largely Shi^{c}ah, in Baku.[90] Meanwhile Abkhazia's economy too was subordinated to the Georgian SSR. Its industry had been badly hit during the Second World War, but in 1948 its first hydroelectric power station came into operation, supplying the needs of Sukhum. By 1965 the Abkhazian mines at Ṭqvarcheli were supplying 45% of Georgia's coal, while its tea and citrus fruit plantations also made a large contribution to Georgia's exports to other parts of the USSR. Moreover, Abkhazia's assets as a region of great natural beauty capable of attracting tourists from Russia and abroad began to be exploited in the late 1950s, when work started on the Pitsunda holiday complex. By then the capital, Sukhum, had a population of 64,700.[91]

The ethnic composition of Abkhazian territory had changed radically since 1921: the number of Russians leapt from 12,500 in 1926 (6%) to c. 60,000 (19%) in the unreliable census of 1939. While the rate of increase of the Russian element abated thereafter, it was then the turn of the Georgians – mainly from Megrelia – to increase their numbers in Abkhazia from c. 92,000 in 1939 (30%) to almost 240,000 in 1989 (45%). This huge increase of the Georgian element reflected the special migration policy initiated by Beria and Stalin. Against this trend the number of Abkhazians in their own republic increased slowly (compared with the high percentage increases in other Caucasian and Islamic territories) from about 56,000 in 1926 to nearly

94,000 in 1989, but their share in the total population fell from 28% in 1926 to 18% in 1989.[92]

As the Georgian government's attitude towards ethnic minorities in the Georgian republic did not improve after 1953, by the late 1970s there was inter-ethnic friction in every region having non-Georgian citizens.[93] The most potent factor stimulating Abkhazian nationalism was Georgian chauvinism, which had become increasingly shameless since 1949, when a Megrelian, P. Ingoroqva, revived the nineteenth-century idea that in Abkhazia it was not the Georgians who were incomers, but the Abkhaz, who had driven out the Megrelians (ostensibly the original inhabitants) as recently as the seventeenth century. After Stalin's death Ingoroqva's ‘theory’ was dropped for some time, but discrimination against the Abkhazians persisted. Consequently, in 1957, 1964 and 1967 there were mass protests by Abkhazians against their Georgian overlords, with demands for real autonomy or separation. Even objective scholarship on the history of Abkhaz–Georgian relations was subjected to persecution if it departed from Tbilisi's established line, as in the case of the historian Yu. Voronov in 1966, whose writings were banned by the KPSS Central Committee, and the Abkhazian professor Inal-Apa in 1976, when KGB methods of personal discreditation at a closed meeting evoked a letter to the Central Committee written by his colleagues in defence of his academic integrity.[94] By the 1980s another ‘scholarly’ campaign of rewriting Georgian, and especially Abkhazian, history was in full swing, developing I. Javakhishvili's speculative view that all North Caucasian languages were related to Georgian, and that *all* North Caucasus peoples had been vassals of the Georgian monarchy since the twelfth century. The assertion that medieval Abkhazia was a ‘Georgian kingdom’ peopled mainly by Kartlians, and that the Abkhazians proper were a primitive people without identified rulers, who became Georgia's vassals as early as the fourth century AD, was propounded in a revised edition of an eight-volume history of Georgia published in the 1980s.[95] As a result, despite the total lack of historical evidence for Javakhishvili's idea, ‘it nevertheless reigns unchallenged in Georgian historiography’.[96] This dubious thesis was also systematically supported by Georgian experts on the Caucasian languages, so that, although the relationships between their various groups, and especially any link between South Caucasian (Kartvelian) and North Caucasian languages, remain unproved, ‘a number of Soviet scholars, particularly in Georgia, accept the common origin of all the Caucasian languages as an article of faith, which has thus become the working hypothesis underlying their research’.[97]

In 1977 the Moscow government received a letter signed by 130 Abkhaz intellectuals, requesting restoration of the Abkhazian ASSR's autonomous rights and its subordination directly to Moscow instead of to Georgia. The fact that this brought no result – other than the punitive dismissal from their posts of all the signatories – demonstrated the mutual support system existing between Moscow's General Secretary Brezhnev and KPSS bosses in the union republics (in this case Shevardnadze) to ensure preservation of the status quo. However, while the Moscow authorities were discriminating against ‘minority languages’ throughout the USSR, and Georgians were demonstrating vociferously against Moscow's attempt to impose Russian as their republic's official language, a comparable assault against Abkhazia had been launched within the Georgian SSR by Shevardnadze's government. It had exacerbated discontent in Abkhazia by planning to impose the Georgian language there – and found the Abkhaz people as passionate as themselves in their opposition to this infringement of their integrity. It was then that the Abkhazians, their distrust of Georgia confirmed by events, made their first, unsuccessful, request to the Moscow government for the secession of their republic from the Georgian SSR and its inclusion within the Russian Federation.[98]

It suited even Brezhnev's government to agree that there were grounds for Abkhazian complaints of cultural discrimination, and it decreed various reforms, as a result of which a university was founded in Sukhum to improve access to higher education for Abkhazians. New television and radio programmes in their language began, more Abkhazian books and magazines were published, the republic's industry and roads received further development, and the wholesale felling of its forests ceased. Meanwhile, Abkhazia produced a writer, Fazil Iskander, whose chronicles, published in Russian, of life in ‘Soviet’ Abkhazia as it took place around its now octogenarian inhabitant, Sandro of Chegem, stood out among his contemporaries (Russian or non-Russian) in the USSR by their light touch and serious humour. Positive discrimination was arranged in the Abkhazian republic's administration so that, despite the preponderance of Georgians in the population, there was a slight numerical bias in favour of the Abkhaz in the Supreme Soviet, the KP committee and the civil service, and an Abkhazian predominance of nearly 3:1 in the council of ministers.[99] In addition, the first secretary of the republic's KP was an Abkhaz and, according to Georgians, the Russian head of the MVD promoted only non-Georgian officers. The Abkhazians’ position was also strengthened by a rule prohibiting new Georgian settlers from obtaining land or dwellings in Abkhazia.[100] Nevertheless, in addition to the sense of injustice they had felt since their persecution by the Russian imperial government in the nineteenth century, the Abkhaz now experienced systematic discrimination and the inundation of their country by Georgians. Their protests were voiced again in 1985 in a letter from three Abkhazian writers to the KPSS Congress, pointing out the obstacles with which the Georgian government restricted Abkhazian cultural facilities, the lack of even dictionaries and textbooks of Abkhazian, and the continuing decline in everyday use and teaching of their language, in contrast with the ubiquitous dominance of Georgian.[101]

Conclusion

In the Caucasus the Soviet Russian government in the late 1980s possessed a region with the most entangled complex of inter-ethnic problems that existed anywhere in the USSR. As elsewhere, these problems – each one representing the whole historical experience and contemporary situation of a different Caucasian nation – totalling at least twenty-four – had been largely ignored by the USSR's communist government. One reason for this was the attitude of disregard and often contempt shown by many Russians towards the non-Russian peoples of the empire. This attitude had been sanctioned and strengthened during the Brezhnev period by the official doctrine of 'merging and fusion of nations', some of which were destined to survive, others to become assimilated to a larger, more significant nationality – especially the Russians. This was part of the ideological self-delusion practised by the ruling KPSS clique, while denying the existence in the USSR of any inter-ethnic problems. In their doctrine, the whole complex of ethnic awareness and national aspirations (except those of the Russian people) was dismissed as irrelevant and harmful 'relics of the past'. Unfortunately, such 'theoretical' preconceptions were in tune with the commonplace beliefs of the Russian masses, who, despite their facile conviction about the Russian people's 'generosity of spirit', were quite prone to racial prejudice.

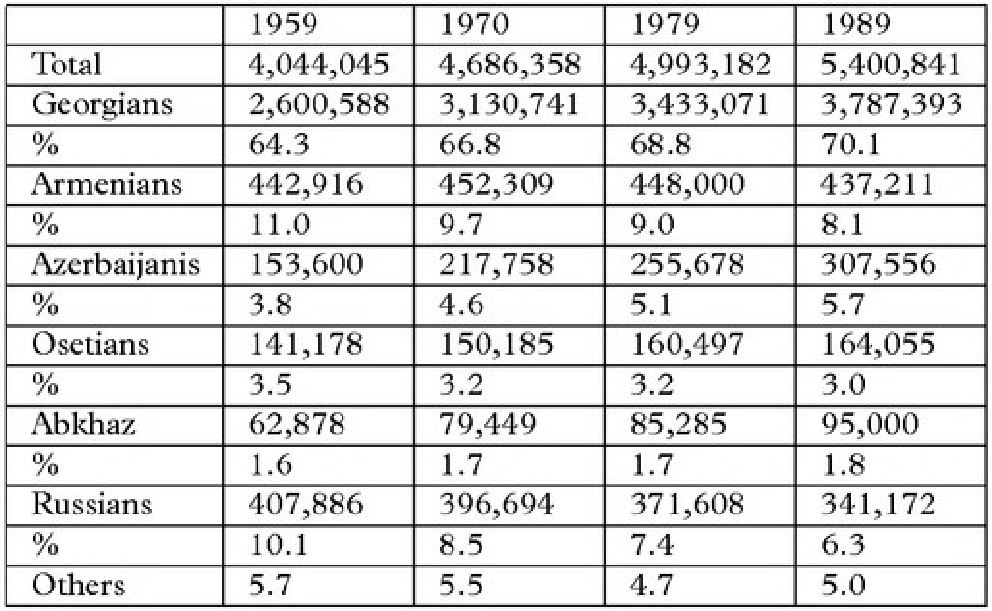
The traditional scapegoats for Russia's misfortunes – apart from the ideological monsters of ‘capitalism’, the ‘bourgeois’, ‘the West’, etc. – had been the Jews and the Tatars (equated with the Mongols). Increasingly, it was free traders from Caucasian countries who peddled their goods in Russia who were blamed for causing disorder, and a new myth based on racial prejudice developed. Russians had always used derogatory nicknames for non-Russian people in the empire – ‘tufts’ (*khokhly* or *chuby*) for Ukrainians, ‘skinheads’ (*gololobye*) for Muslims – and now there were ‘black-arses’ (*chernozhopye*), or simply ‘blacks’ (*chornye*), for Caucasians or southerners in general.[102] Since the nineteenth century such prejudice had been self-evident fact for much of the Russian population, providing automatic justification for distrust, harassment, coercive ‘pacification’ and, if necessary, extirpation of such undesirable subjects of long-suffering ‘Holy Russia’. This general prejudice was now applied particularly to the Chechens, the least submissive of Caucasian peoples. Thus, by the 1990s Caucasians had become general scapegoats – presented as inherently dishonest, cunning and capable only of trading drugs and fighting.[103]

[1] The figures were: 84,860 Azerbaijanis (2.6% of the total population), 56,127 Kurds (1.7%), 59,896 Russians and Ukrainians (1.85%) 5,963 Assyrians (0.2%) and 4,650 Greeks (0.14%): Census 1989, Minneapolis, pp. 636–41. See also Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 386.

[2] Harutyunyan, *Sobytiya v Nagornom Karabakhe*, pt 1, p. 18.

[3] Azerbaijan's minorities included: Lezgis – 171,395 (2.4%), Avars – 44,072 (0.6%), Georgians – 14,197 (0.2%), Talysh – 21,169 (0.3%), Tsakhurs – 13,318 (0.2%), Kurds – 12,226, Tats – 10,239, Laks – 1,878. See Census 1989, Minneapolis, p. 484; E. Fuller, 'Azerbaijan rediscovers its "vanished" minorities', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 52, pp. 20–2.

[4] Population census figures for the Georgian SSR were:



	1959	1970	1979	1989
Total	4,044,045	4,686,358	4,993,182	5,400,841
Georgians	2,600,588	3,130,741	3,433,071	3,787,393
%	64.3	66.8	68.8	70.1
Armenians	442,916	452,309	448,000	437,211
%	11.0	9.7	9.0	8.1
Azerbaijanis	153,600	217,758	255,678	307,556
%	3.8	4.6	5.1	5.7
Osetians	141,178	150,185	160,497	164,055
%	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.0
Abkhaz	62,878	79,449	85,285	95,000
%	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8
Russians	407,886	396,694	371,608	341,172
%	10.1	8.5	7.4	6.3
Others	5.7	5.5	4.7	5.0

[5] Many of these settled in various parts of Soviet Central Asia, and after the ban on them was lifted in 1989 some moved to Azerbaijan. Others resettled in southern Georgia, mainly among the Armenian population of Samtskhe-Javakheti region: see Wikipedia, 'Meskhetian Turks'. See a very thorough analysis, especially of Russian motivation, in S. E. Wimbush and R. Wixman, 'The Meskhetian Turks: a new voice in Central Asia', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, vol. 17, nos. 2 & 3, 1975, pp. 320–39.

[6] E. Fuller, ‘Expert on nationality relations appointed Georgian minister of culture’, *RFE/REL*, 1984, no. 65, pp. 1–3.

[7] Census 1989, Minneapolis, pp. 452–69.

[8] These rough percentages are derived from evidence of these ethnic groups in the USSR censuses of 1926 and 1937; the approximate numbers they produce are: Kartli-Ḳakhetians – 3,106,000; Megrelians – 492,350; Acḥars – 151,500; and Svans – 26,500. Cf. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 207; Census 1926, p. 57; Census 1937, [pt. 2], p. 58. In the 1897 census the division of Georgians was even more detailed: ‘Georgians’ – 823,968, Imeretians – 273,186, Megrelians – 239,625, Svans 15,756 – totalling 1,352,535 ‘Kartvelians or Iberians’; but Acḥars were not mentioned by name. See Census 1897, p. xiii.

[9] A. S. Chikobava, ‘Kartvelskiye yazyki: vvedeniye’, in *Yazyki narodov SSSR*, vol. IV, *Iberiysko-kavkazskiye yazyki*, pp. 15–21; A. N. Kiziria, ‘Zanskiy [Megrelo-chanskiy] yazyk’, *Ibid.*, pp. 62–76; V. T. Topuria, ‘Svanskiy yazyk’, *Ibid*., pp. 77–94; Hewitt, *Georgian*, p. 1.

[10] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953–5, vol. I, p. 546; vol. II, pp. 174, 351, 459; vol. III, pp. 51, 306; *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, vol. II, pp. 125, 180–1; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, pp. 697–8; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 167, 193; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, pp. 346, 358, 523, 654, 672, 785, 948, 1152, 1197, 1511.

[11] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 198, 214, 242, 268, 294, 337–8, 371–2, 388; vol. II, p. 415.

[12] *Narty: epos osetinskogo naroda*, edited by V. I. Abayev, *et al.*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 370, 372–3, 375, 379–80, 383; Tekhov, ed., *Ocherki istorii Yugo-Osetinskoy*, pp. 61–2.

[13] E.g. N. A. Tsagov, *Iz adygskogo narodnogo eposa: materialy arkhiva N. A. Tsagova*, Nalchik, 1987.

[14] *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, p. 13.

[15] *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 70–6; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. I, pp. 72–4, 106–7, 112–13, 115, 117–19.

[16] *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 367; *Ocherki, istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 260, 282, 340–2; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 282, 284, 260.

[17] *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, pp. 282–3, 315–24.

[18] *Ibid*., vol. II, pp. 224–5, 232–5, 246–51, 266–70; Totoyev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki*, vol. II, pp. 224, 246–50.

[19] *Istoriya Kabardy*, pp. 322–3, 369; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 254.

[20] Chugayev, *et al.*, eds., *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoy ASSR*, pp. 276–303, 309–33, 352–4, 359–61, 389–90.

[21] Tillett, *Great Friendship*, pp. 3–4.

[22] *Ibid*., pp. 78–83, 87–90, 92–7, 131, 133, 138–9, 158–9. The theme of the threat from abroad culminated in a volume entitled *Shamil, Henchman of the Turkish Sultanate and the British Colonizers*, published in Tbilisi in 1953: *Ibid*., p. 167.

[23] *Ibid*., pp. 140–1.

[24] *Ibid*., pp. 137–8, 142–4. Huseynov probably killed himself as a result of Baghyrov's threats: *Ibid*., p. 147. In Kazakstan a similar campaign was launched to overturn the hitherto ‘progressive’ role in history of the national hero Kasym Kenesary (1802–47) and his ‘anti-colonial movement’: *Ibid*., pp. 110–15, 143, 148–52, 160. Kenesary and his movement were later ‘rehabilitated’; see *Istoriya Kazakhstana*, pp. 214–21.

[25] Tillett, *Great Friendship*, pp. 196–221, 421.

[26] As we have seen, oaths of allegiance were not looked upon by either side as permanent, but were frequently broken and remade. The Russian word *prisoyedineniye* ‘adding to and uniting with’ is very general, and vague, in meaning, although often translated as ‘annexation’; similarly *osvoyeniye*, literally ‘making one's own, assimilation’, is equated in Russian history-writing with a wide range of meanings, such as ‘opening up’ unexploited territory.

[27] See Ch. 7.

[28] T. S. Mahomadova, ‘Nachalo “blistatelnoy epokhi Shamilya” (vosstaniye 1840 g. v Chechne)’, in *Narodno-osvoboditelnaya dvizheniye gortsev Dagestana i Chechni v 20–50kh godakh XIX v. Vsesoyuznaya nauchnaya konferentsiya 20–22 iyunya 1989 g.*, Makhachkala, 1989, p. 52, quoted in H.-M. Ibrahimbeyli, ‘Narodno-osvoboditelnaya borba gortsev Severnogo Kavkaza pod rukovodstvom Shamilya protiv tsarizma i mestnykh feodalov’, *Voprosy istorii*, 1990, no. 6, p. 158.

[29] Bliyev, M. M., ‘K voprosu o vremeni prisoyedineniya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza k Rossii’, *Voprosy istorii*, 1970, no. 7, pp. 51–4; Bryan, ‘Internationalism’, pp. 207–9; Ibrahimbeyli, ‘Narodno-osvoboditelnaya borba’, pp. 152, 158–9; A. Sheehy, ‘Yet another rewrite of the history of the Caucasian War?’, *RFE/REL*, 1984, no. 39; V. B. Vinogradov and S. Ts. Umarov, *Vmeste k velikoy tseli*, p. 9, quoted in Ibrahimbeyli, ‘Narodno-osvoboditelnaya borba’, p. 153.

[30] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 187; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1983, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 4; 1984, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 4; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 348–9.

[31] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 12, 17, 166–9, 171–2, 180, 184–5; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 30; A. A. Mahomedov, ‘Natsionalnye traditsii: “konservatsiya” ili predaniye zabveniyu?’, in Ivannikov, B. D., ed., *Problemy mezhetnicheskikh otnosheniy na Severnom Kavkaze: sbornik statey uchastnikov Vserossiyskoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii*, Stavropol, 1994, p. 68; S. Umarov, ‘Myuridizm s blizkogo rasstoyaniya’, *Nauka i religiya*, 1979, no. 10, pp. 30–2; *CDSP*, 1980, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 9–10. Cf. F. E. B. Bryan, ‘Anti-religious activity in the Chechen-Ingush Republic of the USSR and the survival of

Islam', *Central Asian Survey*, 1984, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 111–12. A survey in the 1970s found that 53% of Chechens were believers, and 62,000 of them were *murid*s; in Ingushia numbers were 43% Muslims and 11,000 *murid*s: Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, pp. 51–2.

[32] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 1; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 54; Bryan, 'Internationalism', pp. 197, 204, 206, 216; Murtuzaliyeva, S., 'Uchityvaya mestnye osobennosti', *Sovetskiy Dagestan*, 1982, no. 5, pp. 46–50.

[33] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 188; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, pp. 10, 23–4, 116–25; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1987, vol. 6, no. 12/13, pp. 6–7; Bryan, 'Internationalism', pp. 209, 218.

[34] Murtuzaliyeva, 'Uchityvaya mestnye osobennosti', pp. 46–7.

[35] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 117; Bryan, 'Internationalism', pp. 196–7; *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 1–2; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1988, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 10–12; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 11, p. 27; *Sovetskiy Dagestan*, cited in *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 1; no. 4, pp. 5–7.

[36] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 56; Bryan, 'Internationalism', pp. 203, 205, 211, 217 nn. 30, 31; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1984, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 4.

[37] Bryan, ‘Internationalism’, p. 198; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1987, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 7–8; 1988, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 8–10.

[38] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 154, 159, 199, 204–6; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars*, p. 117.

[39] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 195; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 187–8.

[40] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 199, 203; Census 1989, Minneapolis, pt. 1, p. 280; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1982, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 2; 1983, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 4; 1984, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 4; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 11, p. 27.

[41] Census 1989: see R. J. Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 174–5, 273–5.

[42] Hewitt, ‘Aspects’, pp. 136, 139–40, 143 n. 4; Slider, D., ‘Crisis and response in Soviet nationality policy: the case of Abkhazia’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1985, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 53–4.

[43] Avtorkhanov, ‘Chechens and Ingush’, pp. 193–4, n. 17; Avtorkhanov, *Imperiya Kremlya*, pp. 351–2; Bedzhanov, M. B. and A. Sh. Buzarov, ‘Vozrozhdeniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya narodov Severnogo Kavkaza’, in Bugay and Mekulov, eds., *Severnyy Kavkaz*, pp. 284–5; Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, pp. 11–12; N. Kuyok, ‘Grimasy rodnogo slova’, *Druzhba narodov*, 1989,

no. 5, p. 172; ‘Osetian problems’, *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 10.

[44] Urusbiyeva, ‘Drama’, p. 170.

[45] R. Wixman, ‘Ethnic nationalism in the Caucasus’, *Nationalities Papers*, 1982, 10, 2, pp. 137–56.

[46] Bryan, ‘Internationalism’, p. 210; Ibrahimov, ‘Narody Daghestana’.

[47] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, p. 12.

[48] Umalatov, *Ot Stalina*, pp. 13–14, 16–17, 20, 76–7.

[49] *Ibid*., pp. 26–8. *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 129–30, etc., contains no reference to cotton-growing in North Caucasus, but does mention that in 1953–8 large areas of orchards and vineyards were laid out.

[50] R. Chenciner, ‘The 1990 elections in Daghestan’, *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1990, 9, 4, p. 4.

[51] *Sovetskiy Dagestan*, 1977, no. 2, p. 51, quoted in Bryan, ‘Internationalism’, p. 214.

[52] A. Ch. Kasayev, review of A. B. Dzadziyev, *Sotsialno-etnicheskaya struktura Severnoy Osetii, in Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1991, no. 5, pp. 145–8.

[53] *Census*, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989.

[54] Horrigan, ‘How many people’, p. 36. North Osetia's proportion of the industrial workforce associated with military industry was 33.1%; the Karachay-Cherkes AP was also high, with 25.1%; and Daghestan was among the highest in the USSR with 35.1%.

[55] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, pp. 4–7.

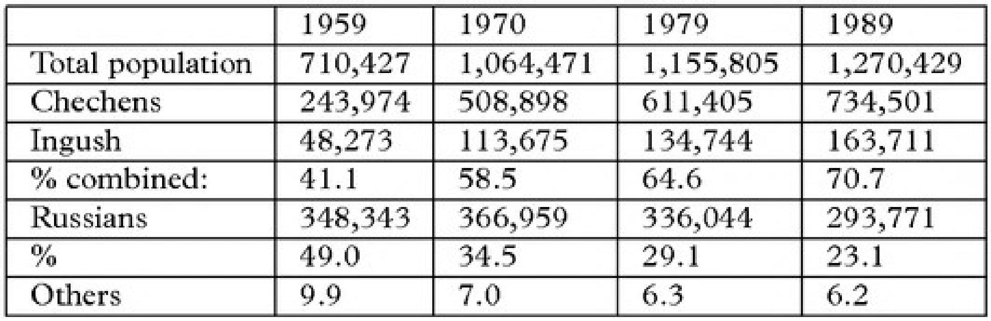
[56] Usmanov, *Nepokoryonnaya Chechnya*, pp. 84–5.

[57] S. Khovanskiy, ‘Afghanistan: the bleeding wound’, *D’étente*, Spring 1986, cited in Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. 13; Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, pp. 156–61, 184–6.

[58] I. Yu. Aliroyev and D. D. Mezhidov, *Chechentsy: obychai, traditsii, nravy. Sotsialno-filosofskiy aspekt*, Groznyy, 1992, pp. 175–6.

[59] A. Zelkina, ‘Islam and politics in the North Caucasus’, *Religion, State and Society*, 1993, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 119.

[60] Population Census figures for Chechenia-Ingushia are:



	1959	1970	1979	1989
Total population	710,427	1,064,471	1,155,805	1,270,429
Chechens	243,974	508,898	611,405	734,501
Ingush	48,273	113,675	134,744	163,711
% combined:	41.1	58.5	64.6	70.7
Russians	348,343	366,959	336,044	293,771
%	49.0	34.5	29.1	23.1
Others	9.9	7.0	6.3	6.2

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[61] Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. 15.

[62] Ibrahimov, 'Narody Dagestana', pp. 118–19; Umalatov, *Ot Stalina*, pp. 79, 83–4.

[63] Horrigan, 'How many people?', pp. 36, 38; Ibrahimov, 'Narody Dagestana', p. 117.

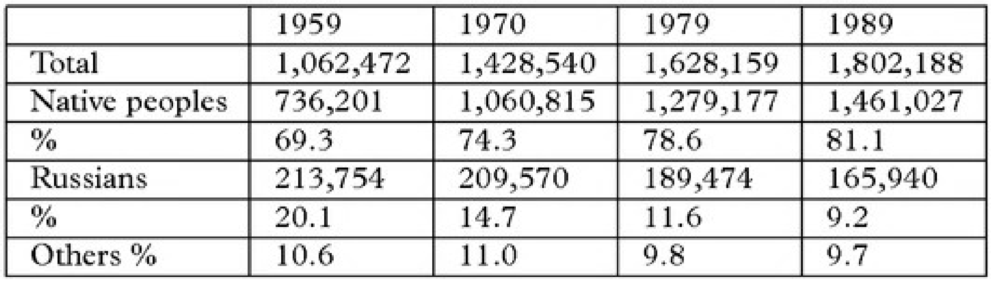
[64] Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, pp. 710–14.

[65] Ibrahimov, 'Narody Dagestana', pp. 109, 114–22, 126.

[66] A. V. Avksentyev, 'Geopoliticheskoye polozheniye Stavropolya i etnicheskiye problemy kraya', in Ivannikov, ed., *Problemy mezhetnicheskikh otnosheniy*, pp. 8–10; Ibrahimov, 'Narody Dagestana', p. 120; K. P. Kalinovskaya and G. E. Markov, 'Nogaytsy – problemy natsionalnykh otnosheniy i kultury', *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1990, no. 2, quoted in *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1990, 9, 4, pp. 10–11.

[67] E. F. Kisriyev, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Respublike Dagestan*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 23–4, 25.

[68] Population Census figures for Daghestan are:



	1959	1970	1979	1989
Total	1,062,472	1,428,540	1,628,159	1,802,188
Native peoples	736,201	1,060,815	1,279,177	1,461,027
%	69.3	74.3	78.6	81.1
Russians	213,754	209,570	189,474	165,940
%	20.1	14.7	11.6	9.2
Others %	10.6	11.0	9.8	9.7

[69] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, p. 558.

[70] *Ibid*., pp. 273, 339–40, 563–7; Pipes, *Formation*, pp. 223, 229, 230; Rizvanov and Rizvanov, *Istoriya lezgin*, p. 30.

[71] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 288–9, 476–7.

[72] *Ibid*., pp. 25–126, 372–3, 377–97, etc.; Aliroyev, *Yazyk*, pp. 28–30.

[73] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 269, 288–9, 339–41, 430–1, 436–7, 478.

[74] *Ibid*., pp. 320–3, 436–7.

[75] *Ibid*., pp. 341, 356–7; Rizvanov and Rizvanov *Istoriya lezgin*, pp. 30, 44–9.

[76] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 357–61.

[77] *Ibid*., pp. 341–2.

[78] *Ibid*., pp. 374–6; *Chronicle of Human Rights*, 1980, no. 40, p. 8; no. 41, p. 5. Like other victims of the GULag system, V. Meylanov wrote a book of memoirs: *Iz pervykh ruk*, Makhachkala, 1990.

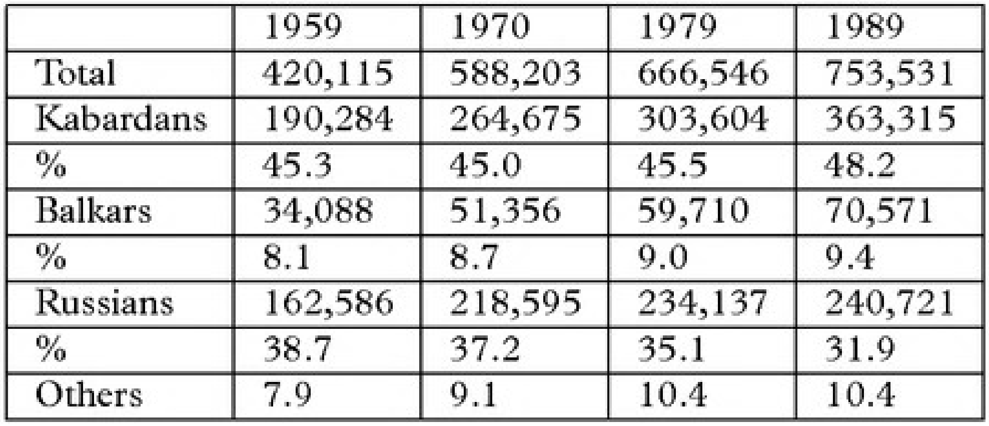
[79] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 342–59, 411–28, 448, 461–603 (documents).

[80] Elberd, *Nash dom*, pp. 32–3; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, pp. 646–7; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 167; Urusbiyeva, 'Drama', p. 170.

[81] Arutyunov, S. A., Ya. S. Smirnova and G. A. Sergeyeva, 'Etnokulturnaya situatsiya v Karachayevo-Cherkesskoy Avtonomnoy Oblasti', *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1990, no. 2, p. 27; Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. II, pp. 290, 297–9; *Ocherki istorii Karachayevo-Cherkesii*, vol. II, p. 341; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, pp. 242–3.

[82] Dzidzoyev and Kadilayev, 'Minnye polya perestroyki', p. 21.

[83] Census figures for Kabarda-Balkaria were:



	1959	1970	1979	1989
Total	420,115	588,203	666,546	753,531
Kabardans	190,284	264,675	303,604	363,315
%	45.3	45.0	45.5	48.2
Balkars	34,088	51,356	59,710	70,571
%	8.1	8.7	9.0	9.4
Russians	162,586	218,595	234,137	240,721
%	38.7	37.2	35.1	31.9
Others	7.9	9.1	10.4	10.4

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[84] Bedzhanov and Buzarov, 'Vozrozhdeniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya', pp. 280–1; Sheehy, 'Justice', p. 19; V. P. Svechnikov and D. T. Totorkulov, 'Politika i osnovnye tendentsii novogo myshleniya v natsionalnom soznanii', in Ivannikov, ed., *Problemy mezhetnicheskikh otnosheniy*, pp. 104–5.

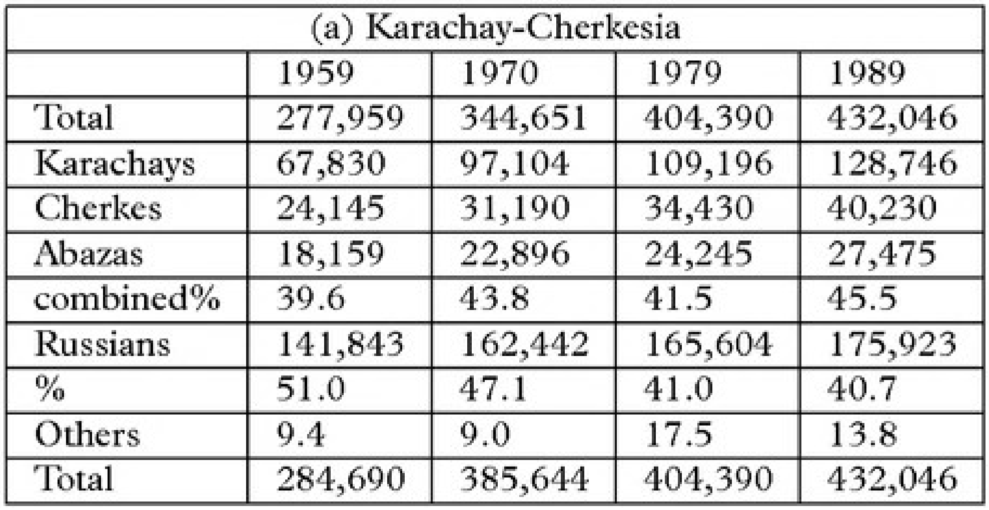
[85] Bedzhanov and Buzarov, 'Vozrozhdeniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya', pp. 244–9, 251–2; A. M. Tlekhuch and R. A. Khanakhu, 'O formirovanii interesa molodyozhi k traditsionnomu narodnomu tvorchestvu adygov', in Khagurov, A. A., R. A. Khanakhu and A. I. Kuyev, eds., *Sotsialnye problemy molodyozhi*, Maykop, 1993, p. 68; Kuyok, 'Grimasy rodnogo slova', pp. 172–3.

[86] Ibrahimov, 'Narody Dagestana', p. 122.

[87] *Pravda*, 20 September 1989, KPSS Plenum.

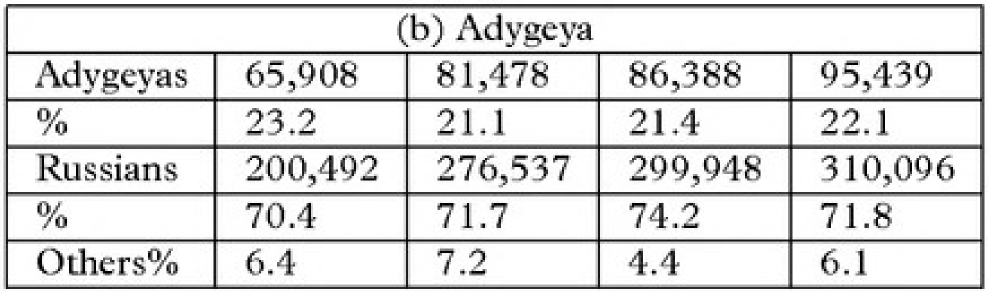
[88] V. A. Avksentyev, 'Etnodemograficheskiye protsessy na Stavropolye i ikh rol v razvitii klimata mezhnatsionalnykh otnosheniy', in Ivannikov, ed., *Problemy mezhetnicheskikh*

otnosheniy, p. 12; Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, p. 277; S. Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan: search for identity and new partners’, in Bremmer and Taras, eds., *Nations and Politics*, p. 249; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 241. Census figures for Karachay-Cherkesia and Adygeya are:



(a) Karachay-Cherkesia

	1959	1970	1979	1989
Total	277,959	344,651	404,390	432,046
Karachays	67,830	97,104	109,196	128,746
Cherkes	24,145	31,190	34,430	40,230
Abazas	18,159	22,896	24,245	27,475
combined%	39.6	43.8	41.5	45.5
Russians	141,843	162,442	165,604	175,923
%	51.0	47.1	41.0	40.7
Others	9.4	9.0	17.5	13.8
Total	284,690	385,644	404,390	432,046



(b) Adygeya

Adygeyas	65,908	81,478	86,388	95,439
%	23.2	21.1	21.4	22.1
Russians	200,492	276,537	299,948	310,096
%	70.4	71.7	74.2	71.8
Others%	6.4	7.2	4.4	6.1

[89] V. S. Belozerov and P. P. Turun, ‘Dinamika rasseleniya narodov po territorii Severnogo Kavkaza’, and V. S. Belozerov and P. P. Turun, ‘Dinamika migratsionnykh protsessov na Stavropolye’, both in Ivannikov, ed., *Problemy mezhetnicheskikh otnosheniy*, pp. 20–2, 114–16.

[90] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 15; Suny, *Making*, p. 289.

[91] Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Gruziya*, pp. 249–51, 254, 257, 260; V. L. Mote, 'Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic', in *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian, Soviet and Eurasian History*, Supplement, vol. I, p. 14.

[92] Hewitt, 'Abkhazia', pp. 281–2; R. K. Klimiashvili, 'What happened in Abkhazia: a Georgian viewpoint', *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, 8, 5, p. 10; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 120; S. Z. Lakoba, 'On the political problems of Abkhazia', *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1990, 9, 1, p. 16; *Pravda*, 19 September 1948, quoted in Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 254.

[93] Shevardnadze, *Future*, p. 35; Suny, *Making*, p. 305.

[94] Hewitt, 'Abkhazia', p. 320 n. 66; Hewitt, ed., *Abkhazians*, pp. 17–18; Hewitt, ed. and trans., 'Appendix', pp. 267–82; S. Lakoba, 'History: 1917–1989', in Hewitt, ed., *Abkhazians*, pp. 97, 99; Mote, 'Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic', p. 14.

[95] *Ocherki istorii Gruzii*, vol. II, pp. 113, 117–18, 250, 280–6. See also Berdzenishvili, *et al.*, eds., *Istoriya Gruzii*, vol. I, pp. 127–8.

[96] Togoshvili, 'Voprosy', p. 35.

[97] Comrie, *Languages*, p. 198.

[98] Fuller, ‘Expert on nationality relations’, p. 3; Fuller, ‘Nationalist protest’; Lakoba, ‘History: 1917–1989’, pp. 97–8; Parsons, ‘National integration’, p. 554.

[99] In 1989, of 140 Supreme Soviet deputies 57 were Abkhazian, 53 Georgian and 14 Russian; the KP provincial committee was 43.7% Abkhazian, 41.4% Georgian; in the civil service 51.8% were Abkhazian and 37.8% Georgian; of 12 government ministers 8 were Abkhaz, 3 Georgian and 1 Russian. In Sukhum the population was 9.9% Abkhaz, 38.3% Georgian and 26.4% Russian, but in the city council Abkhazians outnumbered Georgians 4:1. See Klimiashvili, ‘What happened’, pp. 9–10. Under the new Abkhazian electoral law of 1991, of the sixty-five seats in parliament twenty-eight were for Abkhaz and twenty-six for Georgians: N. Cherkezishvili *et al.*, *On Ethnic Composition of Population of the Georgian Republic* (*Information Material*), Tbilisi, 1993, p. 18.

[100] Slider, ‘Crisis and response’, pp. 61, 62–3, 65.

[101] Hewitt, ‘Appendix’, pp. 283–93.

[102] Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, p. 80; A. Flegon, *Za predelami russkikh slovarey* 3rd edn London, 1973, p. 386.

[103] A. Grannes, “‘Persons of Caucasian nationality” – Russian negative stereotypes’, in O. Høijris and S. M. Yürkükel, eds., *Contrasts and Solutions in the Caucasus*, Aarhus, 1998, pp. 18–25.

17 The Caucasus and the end of the Soviet Union

The crisis in Soviet imperialism: the August 1991 coup

The Caucasus was one of the first parts of the Soviet Union where resentment of Russian political domination, and local inter-ethnic antagonisms, long suppressed by the Communist Party, broke out in a surge of demands for independence. Until the 1980s it had seemed that the USSR would last indefinitely in its existing form, and no one anticipated the imminence of such radical changes as those which the KPSS's new general secretary Mikhail Gorbachov initiated when he came to power in 1985. However, in words addressed by an Armenian writer to his contemporaries in the USSR in 1990:

> Gorbachev embarked upon *perestroika* out of necessity…to try to save the country from inevitable economic and political ruin. It was not Gorbachov, however, who initiated *perestroika*, but your generation and mine, which realized that it was impossible to go on living as we were. Our generation came to this realization in Khrushchev's time but was unable to accomplish anything.[1]

In March 1990 President Gorbachov became aware (from a government expert's report which had been suppressed) that if the country's economic system was not radically changed, the USSR was likely to be among the underdeveloped countries of the ‘third world’ by AD 2000.[2] It was because of this that he embarked upon his programme of reforms under the headings of ‘openness’ or ‘making things public’ (*glasnost*) and ‘restructuring’ (*perestroyka*). He was facing up to the facts of the situation but still attempting to solve numerous fundamental problems by merely tinkering with the state mechanisms which engendered them. As many such ‘restructurings’ had been announced before – for instance, Khrushchov's decentralization of the administration and Brezhnev's prompt reversion to centralization – applying yet another administrative adjustment to the existing system under continuing KPSS rule was no more likely to succeed than its predecessors.

One reason why Soviet economic competition with Western countries was impossible was that throughout the economy everything was ruled by the ‘plan’, conceived entirely in terms of targets to be fulfilled or ‘overfulfilled’ by each enterprise. These plans were set by the vast central planning office in Moscow – ‘Stateplan’ (Gosplan), which also set prices for a list of more than 9 million items. The rigidity imposed by this system inhibited all commercial considerations, such as response to the opportunities or demands of the market, introduction of new technology, or research and development. As a result, looking at ‘the great Soviet industrial plants’ after the 1980s,

> one has a real sense of hubris and nemesis, of a massive human effort diverted by tyranny into senseless and destructive avenues, ultimately collapsing under its own weight. The image of Soviet industrialization traversed the world as a model of how

> a poor country under ruthless leadership could supposedly take a short cut to development and power. Today, Russia is in a worse position than before Communism.[3]

For the Soviet consumer, the dire effects of ‘planning’ were compounded by its linkage with the *nomenklatura* system: like access to top posts, access to goods depended on one's domicile within a ranking system according to which Moscow constituted category 1, Leningrad and the capitals of SSRs such as Tbilisi, Baku and Yerevan category 2, other cities with populations of more than 500,000 category 3, and so on, down to villages and collective farms, whose inhabitants were severely underprivileged in terms of supplies and opportunities.[4]

Meanwhile, many profound social problems had developed in both urban and rural areas, the most widespread of which was alcoholism, which became the object of the first campaign of Gorbachov's government. Unfortunately, this ‘reform’ was imposed with traditional Soviet disregard for public opinion, and had particularly harmful effects in Georgia, where, as in other grape-growing republics, farmers were ordered to plough up the vineyards, with dire effects on the local economy (so far as the measures stated were actually carried out).[5] Most insidious, however, was the moral duality engendered by the communist régime. The combination of chronic fear and uncertainty with the lies and oversimplifications of communist propaganda drove people to what George Orwell called ‘doublethink’ – ‘the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them’. This ubiquitous conflict between word and deed had already been clear to

Orjonikidze in the 1930s, and alienation of the whole population, requiring double standards of behaviour, avoidance of independent political opinions, blind obedience to instructions from above, and fear of personal responsibility, produced a kind of ‘split personality in society affecting whole generations and social groups’.[6]

After nearly 70 years of make-believe achievement of utopia a dreary fantasy prevailed. All children and students had to learn ideologically warped history and Marxist-Leninist ‘philosophy’ which nobody believed in except the ignorant, the youthfully naive and a small number of thoroughly indoctrinated KPSS members incapable, or afraid, of independent thought. The fact that there was currency inflation in the USSR was simply suppressed. Despite a highly impressive level of culture among the intelligentsia, the Soviet population was kept ill informed, its awareness in many areas stunted by propaganda and lack of access to information about the world outside. From 1917 onwards the criminality of the Soviet régime forced normally honest people to resort to dishonesty in order to survive. In everyday life one of the universal facts was that goods in short supply, better living accommodation, better medical treatment, admission to educational establishments, police permission to live in Moscow or other high-category cities and even passes in examinations or the satisfactory outcome of lawsuits, could be bought – by those with sufficient means – through bribery. The reason for this was the permanent shortage of consumer goods and the inadequacy of services – which also ensured that, despite prohibitory laws, private trading never ceased after 1917, and by the 1980s formed a vast, ubiquitous, but hidden network. As we have seen, the peoples of the Caucasus played their own special part in this system.[7]

Corruption went far beyond the black market, however, permeating the Communist Party itself at all levels from the district committee to the Central Committee, and inextricably interwoven with the power and privileges of the *nomenklatura*. So far had the party come from its egalitarian spring that its ruling élite enjoyed enormous privileges in the form of access to special shops, restaurants and services which were closed to the general public, and in which payment was made not in ordinary currency, but with special vouchers costing about one-third of their face value, while members of the highest category, the Politburo, paid nothing whatever. These special people also enjoyed access to exclusive hospitals, housing of superior quality and well-appointed sanatoria and holiday villas. In a society where no principle of legality operated, the secretaries of the KPSS at various levels enjoyed enormous power in their territories and, as the general secretary at the top of the pyramid possessed well-nigh absolute power, corruption had its centre there.[8] The combination of political privilege and economic influence produced the closed circles which came to be called the 'mafia'. When suppression of opinion was lifted in 1986 it quickly became evident that Soviet society was riddled with sources of conflict and that, as with the crude suppression of religion, every social and ethnic problem which had existed in 1918 and had subsequently been 'solved' was in fact simply suppressed, but contrived to survive in dormancy, ready to reappear if circumstances altered.

Gorbachov's tacking towards radical reform proceeded cautiously in 1986–8 through the treacherous waters of KPSS Congresses and Conferences, during which he steered towards the goal of democratization and breaking the grip of the privileged class. The USSR Constitution was amended to permit the creation of a new parliament – a 5,000-strong Congress of People's Deputies, two-thirds of them directly elected by citizens in a secret ballot, from which a Supreme Council would be elected. The pre-election campaign in December to March 1988–9 involved millions of citizens in unprecedented political discussion, and the first session of the USSR Congress, beginning in May 1989, was an exciting demonstration of mass participation.[9] Here, in contrast with every previous KPSS Congress, a succession of vocal, intelligent delegates from all sections of society spoke their minds freely, without self-censorship, on every topic that troubled the peoples of the Soviet Union. To the millions of television viewers who watched the Congress proceedings, it seemed there were grounds for great optimism in the realization that so many people showed an 'extraordinary rapid acquisition of political skills', that 'Despite…misgivings that the people are not ready for democracy…a great many of them most certainly are.'[10] Unfortunately, this attempt to create parliamentary democracy in a country still in the grip of the communist system led to a contradictory conclusion: the election of a reactionary, largely communist, Supreme Soviet, from which many of the most gifted and active champions of reform were excluded.[11]

Private enterprise – the projected solution to the problems of an inefficient and wasteful economic system – was still prevented from developing openly, so that the existing cumbersome ministerial control of commerce and industrial enterprises was scarcely affected, while production continued to fall. Unfortunately, up to 1990 everything suggested that, despite his apparent commitment to economic reform, Gorbachov was principally committed to salvaging communism, preserving the USSR and maintaining the existing collective and state farms.[12] In March 1990

Gorbachov was elected president of the USSR, but his ambiguity and vacillation evoked Boris Yeltsin's forthright criticism, and an increasingly bitter confrontation developed between the two. While Gorbachov seemed incapable of advancing reform further, Yeltsin's rise to power on a surge of public support continued. In May the Russian Republic convened its own Congress of People's Deputies, and Yeltsin became effectively president of Russia by election to the chairmanship of its Supreme Soviet – which, like that of the USSR, included a large proportion of communist, anti-reform deputies. Meanwhile rebellion in the non-Russian republics swelled from 1988 onwards, as war broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan over possession of Highland Karabagh, while Estonia, by declaring its sovereignty, created a precedent soon followed by Lithuania and Latvia, the former declaring full independence in March 1990.

For the narrow-minded mass of communists and former beneficiaries of the KPSS's 70-year monopoly of political power, these events were unpalatable, and they formed the reactionary opposition to the endeavours of Gorbachov and Yeltsin to achieve a transition from the communist command economy to a free market. Thus, while big public demonstrations in support of Yeltsin were held in 1990–1, other people were planning to re-establish the old system. On 19 August 1991 some of the most reactionary KPSS, army and secret police officials, including the prime minister, vice-president and ministers of defence and state security, attempted a coup d’état. President Gorbachov, on holiday in Crimea, was seized by armed renegades and, for the first time perhaps since 1918, soldiers faced civilian demonstrators on the streets of Moscow, while the RSFSR parliament building (the ‘White House’) was defended by troops loyal to Yeltsin and democratic reform against an assault by armoured vehicles organized by the conspirators.

The coup failed and its leaders were arrested, but were magnanimously absolved from charges of treason.[13]

These events appeared to be the final act in the disastrous life of the KPSS, which had destroyed its own credibility as a ‘party of the people’: in October 1991 it was suspended, and later disbanded. The division of power between the governments of the Soviet Union and the Rossiyan Federative Republic had become pointless, and President Yeltsin gradually subordinated the organs and financial functions of the former to his own RSFSR government. Meanwhile, President Gorbachov – desperate to preserve the imperial union at all costs – strove unsuccessfully to have his new Union Treaty accepted by the former soviet socialist republics. On 8 December 1991 his efforts were pre-empted by Yeltsin's conclusion of an agreement with the presidents of Ukraine and Belorussia to found a ‘Commonwealth of Independent States’ (CIS), which other ex-SSRs could join, and the three presidents declared that the USSR had ceased to exist. Gorbachov had to bow to the inevitable, and ceased to be president of the Soviet Union. In December 1991 the name ‘RSFSR’ was changed to ‘the Rossiyan Federation’ (Rossiyskaya Federatsiya) or simply ‘Rossiya’, and President Yeltsin assumed responsibility for political and economic reform in this largest component of the former USSR.

The USSR's non-Russian peoples assert their identity

However unexpected may have been the economic collapse of the Soviet Union and its political consequences, its many long-suppressed problems of inter-ethnic relations were ripe for any change in circumstances to let them burst out.

Almost no one as yet anticipated the break-up of the Russian empire, because the 'nationalities problem' was commonly declared, and often believed, to have been solved:[14] it was 'the great achievement of the communist regimes in multinational countries to limit the disastrous effects of nationalism within them'[15] – echoing the orthodox Marxist assumption that it was nationalism (not communism!) that was 'disastrous'. Such opinions arose from a mass of writings about nations and nationalism, replete with ideological theorizing, which had been purveyed and mutually echoed since the 1960s (not only in the USSR!) as the academic orthodoxy on the subject. The main dogma of this doctrine was that nationalism was a relatively recent (eighteenth-century) development in human history, exclusively connected with the idea of the nation-state, which was itself an 'invention' of 'bourgeois' ideologists or of 'liberalism'.[16]

Thus it was very widely believed that 'internationalism' was inherently and unquestionably better than nationalism. Yet many reasonable people in numerous countries ignored the assertions of political theorists, valued their own national consciousness and strove to achieve or preserve the independence of their supposedly outmoded nation states. As H. Seton-Watson wrote:

> merely to inveigh against nationalism does little to help the human race…Nations cannot escape their history, and individuals cannot opt out of their nations…nations, created over longer or shorter periods of time, with their own speech and culture and beliefs and institutions, are virtually indestructible; persecution and massacre more often intensify than eliminate their national feeling.[17]

The most dogmatic prophets of the assimilation of peoples into ever larger political units were the Russian communists, who preached that national consciousness was misguided, harmful and retrogressive – and was therefore to be prohibited. Yet, even while suppressing any manifestation of nationalism among Moscow's subject peoples and demanding unquestioning acceptance of the utopian idea of classless internationalism, they were themselves fostering Soviet *Russian* nationalism. Events after 1986 showed how shallow the Soviet solution was, as ethnic conflicts surfaced all over the USSR – probably with greater intensity and less hope of rational solution than if they had been freely resolved during the preceding 70 years, since 'national consciousness denied or humiliated becomes an explosive force of deadly power'.[18]

The 'rise of nationalism' (i.e. of *non-Russian* nationalism or patriotism) in the USSR came as a surprise to most Western specialists in 'Soviet studies' – many of whom held such a unitary view of the Soviet Union that, apart from the existence of the fifteen union republics (SSRs) and a vague awareness that the population of the USSR included more than 100 indigenous nationalities, they practically disregarded these 'minorities' (or 'non-titular nationalities') as a political or human reality, and paid little attention to the ASSRs, autonomous provinces and autonomous regions. To others, however, it was clear that among the peoples of the USSR resentment against subjection to the imperial 'centre' and a desire for political independence existed long before the 1980s. For instance, in recent times there had been inter-ethnic disturbances involving Georgians (1956, 1978), Chechens and Ingush (1958), Ukrainians (1961, 1964), Latvians (1962), Germans (1964, 1974), Crimeans (1964, 1968, 1969), Meskheti 'Turks' (1965), Lithuanians (1972), Armenians (1979) and Estonians (1980). Such events suggested that widespread antipathy towards the imperial power must exist in the USSR, as in the colonies of any empire. The history of the British and other empires had long shown – for instance, in India – that resentment against domination by an outside power is the most obvious cause of a nationalist reaction: a nation's desire to assert its individuality and be responsible for its own welfare.

Since Gorbachov's accession as general secretary of the KPSS in March 1985, the question of national cultures and inter-ethnic relations had become widely publicized in the Soviet press, although the ‘nationalities problem’ was not his first priority. However, it soon became inescapable as old inter-ethnic grudges and just causes resurfaced, and at the mid-1988 KPSS conference on political decentralization and democratization Gorbachov's main speech focussed entirely on ethnic problems. By November 1988 Estonia had declared its sovereignty in defiance of sternly repeated warnings from Moscow. On 6 January 1989, on the eve of a new census of the USSR's population, Gorbachov, addressing a meeting of scholars and creative artists, declared that the KPSS would not allow even the smallest nationality to die out, and that the Brezhnevist doctrine of the ‘drawing together and merging’ of nationalities was ‘dangerous and no longer acceptable’.[19]

It was certainly not the ‘nationalities question’ or ‘inter-ethnic conflict’ that threatened the USSR's stability and brought about its collapse. In fact, this was predetermined by ‘internal contradictions’ inherent in its political-economic system (to borrow a stock Marxist concept) – but *glasnost* ‘injected a strong anti-imperial current into Soviet politics… inadvertently encouraged the expression of nationalistic sentiments’, and fostered political involvement and demonstrations which challenged the basis of empire.[20] Once free expression of opinion and public discussion were permitted, all the pent-up resentments against the Moscow régime – and traditional antagonism against other nationalities – rose to the surface, and broke out in protests and sometimes violence. In 1991 nationalist claims to territories were being made against every one of the USSR's fifteen SSRs, six of its ASSRs and one autonomous province.[21]

Thus the once apparently permanent map of the USSR's administrative divisions threatened to break up into numerous disputed areas. As usual, what attracted most attention among foreign governments were the SSRs – so often referred to in the West simply as ‘the republics’, as if lesser ethnic territories scarcely counted – with the result that the problems and liberation movements of ‘lesser’ nationalities inhabiting ASSRs, APs and ARs were largely disregarded. All governments and other official bodies dislike their own domestic ‘minority problems’, and in foreign relations find it simpler and more convenient to deal with large, monolithic units and not waste time over smaller nations. Consequently, whatever might be the rights and wrongs of national, anti-Russian, movements in the USSR, it appeared that for many Western politicians and academics it was troubling, or indeed ‘dangerous’, to see even a communist empire break up into separate, independent smaller states. To their shame, most Western governments accordingly showed prolonged reluctance to give any support to the Baltic republics in their heroic fight to regain their liberty – lest moral support should give offence to Gorbachov's ostensibly reformed communist government – and how much more remote were the concerns of the Caucasian republics and smaller ethnic entities.[22]

The fate of such countries had been thrown to the winds at the Tehran, Moscow and Yalta conferences of 1943–5 when Churchill and Roosevelt capitulated to Stalin's demand that the Baltic states, Poland and eastern Europe must become Soviet Russia's exclusive sphere of influence after the war.[23] A more recent international agreement which proved ambiguous in its effect on the emerging liberation movements of non-Russian subject peoples of the USSR was the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) held in Helsinki in 1975. It endorsed 'principles' governing relations between participating states, with sections on their sovereignty, territorial integrity and 'unity', the inviolability of their frontiers, non-intervention in each others' internal affairs, and avoidance of assistance to terrorist or subversive activities by any other state. While these principles may generally be sound (although incompatible with the general foundations of truly international organizations) the document, which contains about seventy references to 'states', refers to '*peoples*' only in a dozen places, and to 'national minorities' in two. The references to 'peoples' does, however, profess respect for 'the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination' – 'all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference'.[24] The relationship between these avowed rights of *peoples* and the much more detailed statement of the sovereign rights of *states* was not explained in the Final Act. The Soviet Union was a self-proclaimed 'multi-national state' with ethnic territories nominally dedicated to their native peoples and ostensibly enjoying autonomy, but also with a prolonged record of Russian empire-building, including substantial twentieth-century conquests and annexations, and of scant regard for such principles as human rights and self-determination of peoples. It was therefore predictable that the assertion of sovereign rights by its non-Russian subjects would be forcefully opposed by the metropolis in terms of the ‘sovereignty’, ‘territorial integrity’ and ‘unity’ of the Soviet Russian state, and rejection of any external interference in whatever it chose to see as ‘internal matters’. In the 1970s, when so little attention was paid by the world at large to the situation of the subject peoples of the USSR, it was convenient to ignore these facts, but even in the late 1980s Moscow made it clear that it considered sacrosanct not only the borders of the USSR and the states of eastern Europe under communist rule (which Stalin had imposed by force after the Second World War), but also the internal boundaries of Russia's colonies – the constituent ethnic territories of the Soviet Union.[25]

Thus the doctrine of ‘inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity’ of states was invoked by Moscow not only when the USSR began to lose its satellite-colonies in Europe, but also when the subject peoples of Russia's empire began to demand national freedom within the frontiers established around them in the course of the Russian Empire's history and, more specifically, from the 1920s onwards during the formation of the USSR. Consequently the ‘state’ principles embodied in the Helsinki Final Act were imperiously asserted by the Soviet and Russian governments from the very first sign of any attempt at self-determination by non-Russian communities. Moreover, in 1990 – even as the movement for self-determination reached full flood (with popular fronts in the Baltic republics, Ukraine and Armenian Karabagh from 1988), as did the violent suppression of ‘unrest’ by the Soviet Russian army and paramilitaries (Tbilisi 1989, Baku 1990, Moldova 1990, etc.) – another meeting of the CSCE celebrated and reaffirmed with some complacency the ‘Ten Principles’ of the Helsinki Final Act in the ‘Charter of Paris’, including its mutually contradictory principles of self-determination of *peoples* and the territorial integrity of *states*.[26] In this new document, too, subject peoples were referred to only as ‘national minorities’ – but it is to the CSCE's credit that in August 1991 it approved the first admission of breakaway subject peoples of the former Soviet Union – the three Baltic states. Moscow, however, continued to invoke the ‘principle’ of non-interference in internal matters to prevent international assistance to any of its subject peoples, such as the Abkhazians, South Osetians or Chechens, who strove to obtain the self-determination to which, the Helsinki Final Act declared, all had a right.

Self-determination in practice once more

Now that the communist government was forced to recognize the need for profound reform, and permitted the expression of public opinion, non-Russian peoples’ demonstrations and demands for greater freedom followed thick and fast. By the end of 1991 all but two of the union republics had proclaimed their independence from Moscow: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in March--April 1990; Georgia – the first of the Caucasian republics – in April 1991; Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan and Kyrghyzstan in August 1991 (only two weeks after an abortive military coup in Moscow); Tajikistan and Armenia in September; and Turkmenistan in October; only Uzbekistan and Kazakstan postponed their declarations of independence until August and December 1992. All SSRs, beginning with Estonia in November 1988 (and including the Russian Republic in June 1990), had previously gone through the stage of declaring themselves sovereign states. Sovereignty was usually asserted in terms of a republic's exclusive rights over the natural resources in its territory, the supremacy of the republic's own laws over those of the USSR (constitutionally the converse was the case) and the language of the indigenous nationality as the official language of the republic.[27]

The political developments in the union republics were emulated by the ASSRs, beginning in August 1990 with declarations of sovereignty by Karelia, Abkhazia, Komi-land and Tatarstan, while the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was the first to proclaim full independence in November 1990. By then nearly all ASSRs in the RSFSR had declared their sovereignty (usually adding the assurance that they intended to remain within the RSFSR and USSR), and the grudging acceptance of these changes was shown in December 1990 by the official elevation of the ASSRs in the RSFSR to the unqualified status of 'republics'.[28] Many of the autonomous provinces also declared their sovereignty in 1990, beginning with South Osetia (subordinated to Georgia) in September, followed by Altay and Adygeya in October, while further disagreement in the North Caucasus was heralded by the declaration of sovereignty by the combined Karachay-Cherkes AP in December, as a counterblow (no doubt KPSS-inspired) to the unilateral declaration of separate Karachay sovereignty in November. In July 1991 two of the Caucasian APs – Adygeya and Karachay-Cherkesia – were also raised to republic status and removed from subordination to the Russian provinces of Krasnodar and Stavropol respectively.[29] Subsequently in the new Rossiyan Federation Constitution all these ethnic territories were designated as 'subjects of the Federation' on a par with the republics.

These events of practical self-determination were not encouraged by the USSR government. On the contrary, as long as it remained a power in the union, the Communist Party, led by Gorbachov, contested every move towards national autonomy. For union republics alone the USSR

Constitution had always declared the ‘right to secession’ from the union but, as this was never a real option, no procedure existed for putting it into effect. The inflexibility with which Gorbachov and the KPSS viewed the decolonization process in Russia's empire was reflected in the verbal clichés they used: ‘nationalist’ and ‘nationalism’ (even without the epithet ‘bourgeois’), along with ‘separatist’, were inherently pejorative catchwords associated with ‘extremism’ as dangerous heresies. The aspirations of nations striving for liberation from the USSR's existing state structure were called ‘destructive forces’ unleashed by ‘adventurers’ and ‘demagogues’; and the breaking up of the Soviet Russian empire was presented as a calamity of economic disintegration and political destabilization affecting the whole world. Gorbachov attacked the very widely held view that the legacy of the Bolshevik--Soviet period, including Lenin's nationalities policy, had been almost entirely negative, and that in Russia life before 1917 had been less universally miserable than communist propaganda asserted. He presented the anti-Soviet view as a distortion of reality intended to incite ‘national passions’ and ‘all kinds of extremist demands’.[30]

So far as their attitude towards the emerging or re-emerging nation-states of the empire was concerned, Gorbachov and his associates behaved rather like the Russian Provisional Government in 1917, finding nothing better to do than exhort them to be patient and postpone any decision on secession, and warning them of dire consequences arising from ‘hasty’ decisions. Disobedience brought threats and ultimatums, and eventually the use of naked force to intimidate the more recalcitrant peoples into resubmission to Russian power – which unambiguously confirmed that this was indeed a conflict of nationalisms: the aggressive nationalism of the imperial ‘centre’ versus the defensive nationalism of oppressed colonies. Even as the non-Russian republics were defecting one after another, Gorbachov went on trying to concoct a new union treaty which they might be persuaded to sign. He clearly could not comprehend the reality: that, apart from imperial Russia's intellectual and artistic culture, almost none of the subject peoples of the former union and empire respected or trusted Russia sufficiently to wish to remain under its wings (now once again those of the Byzantine imperial double-headed eagle, albeit stripped of the trophy kingdoms on its breast!), notwithstanding any economic or political advantage which might accrue from remaining associated with Russia.

Yeltsin too manifested imperialist convictions when required to deal with non-Russian peoples in practice. The Russian Federation Constitution which he revealed in December 1993 renegued on all his reassurances, bringing bitter disillusionment for the non-Russian republics. Despite lengthy negotiations with them during 1992–3 – resulting in recognition of their sovereignty and a promise to incorporate the Federal Treaty into ‘the first democratic constitution in Russia and [according to Yeltsin] one of the most advanced in the world’ – when the final draft appeared it showed that their trust was betrayed. Yeltsin, in order to obtain the support of the army, had conceded to the Russian communist-nationalists and expunged from the Constitution all reference to the fundamental concerns of the non-Russian peoples.

It has already been noted that for two centuries none of the peoples of the Caucasus had experienced independent national statehood. Islamic statehood under Shamil in Chechenia and Daghestan had been a short-lived theocratic project which the Russians had crushed ruthlessly. The emancipation of the peoples of the Caucasus from the

Russian Empire, their brief, illusory independence, and memories of its harsh suppression and the subsequent reign of terror and corruption were vivid and bitter. On the wider scale, subjection to the Russian Empire and Soviet Union had done nothing to reduce the problems of the Caucasian peoples, whose inherent religious and ethnic antagonisms, and old prejudices, remained as intense and unrestrained as ever. Consequently, once the bonds of KPSS suppression were removed, practically everywhere in the Caucasus the ethno-political situation reverted to what had existed in 1917, and a dozen conflicts broke out from 1986 onwards – confirming the emptiness of Soviet nationalities policy, since clearly no inter-ethnic problems had been resolved during the 70 years of communist rule. So little had been achieved towards genuine reconciliation between nationalities, while simplistic Bolshevik concepts of coercion, class antagonism and 'scientific atheism' had so thoroughly undermined traditional codes of behaviour and ethics, that the conflicts which broke out were more violent than before.

Endemic inter-ethnic grudges, which had always been quite near the surface, broke out again sporadically after Gorbachov's loosening of the gags on public opinion. In the 1970s, as we have seen, Georgia's resistance to linguistic Russification had evoked a bold speech by R. Japaridze and demonstrations in Tbilisi.[31] Ethnic enmity was directed not only against the Russians: the Abkhazians' resentment against subordination to Georgia also re-emerged in various protests and petitions.[32] The communist régime's persecution of certain peoples for alleged collaboration with the Germans in 1942–3 had created new causes for inter-ethnic strife, as the national territories of the Chechens, Ingush, Balkar, Karachays and Kalmyks were reallocated to neighbouring provinces and republics – especially to Georgia, which gained almost 10% in area, and North

Osetia, which expanded by 15% at Ingushia's expense.[33] When these victimized peoples were allowed to return from exile they found alien people living in their homes, and their territories were not always restored in full. In particular, Ingushia's Suburban district, bordering on Vladikavkaz, but now within North Osetia, remained a bone of contention causing resentment and occasional rioting. Conflicts occurring in the Caucasus were sometimes exacerbated by the blood-vengeance tradition and, in contrast with the Baltic republics in particular, warring factions in the Caucasus seemed to have easy access to modern weapons, and resorted to their use more readily, increasing the 'normal' hazards involved in living in the Caucasus.

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[1] Z. Balayan, [interview by E. Oganesyan], *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 26, p. 12.

[2] A survey prepared in 1984 by Alexander Yakovlev's Institute for the World Economy, cited in A. Roxburgh, *The Second Russian Revolution: the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin*, London, 1991, pp. 19–20.

[3] A. Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, New Haven, 1993, p. 329.

[4] For a general account of 'the plan' see Hosking, *History*, pp. 149–54, 363–6, 374–7.

[5] See *Ibid*., pp. 400–2; Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, pp. 27–9, 116–17; Shevardnadze, *Future*, pp. 3–4.

[6] L. A. Gordon and E. V. Klopov, *Chto eto bylo? Razmyshleniya o predposylkakh i itogakh togo, chto sluchilos s nami v 30–40-ye gody*, Moscow, 1989, pp. 225–40.

[7] Simis, *USSR*, p. 187.

[8] *Ibid*., pp. 17–21, 24–30.

[9] Keep, *Last of the Empires*, pp. 351–9; Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, pp. 37–9, 55–8, 72–8, 91–102, 118–19, 125–30, 135, 138–42.

[10] O. Glebov and J. Crowfoot, eds., *The Soviet Empire: Its Nations Speak Out. The First Congress of People's Deputies, 25 May to 10 June 1989*, Chur, 1989, pp. viii–ix.

[11] Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, pp. 138–9.

[12] *Ibid*., pp. 39, 95–101, 144, 199.

[13] Keep, *Last of the Empires*, pp. 400–4; Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, pp. 69, 83–7.

[14] So Gorbachov claimed in a speech in November 1987: T. H. Friedgut, ‘Nations of the USSR: from mobilized participation to autonomous diversity’, in A. J. Motyl, ed., *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*, New York, 1992, p. 207.

[15] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 172–3:

echoing E. H. Carr, *Nationalism and After*, London, 1945 (reprint, 1968) pp. 64–5.

[16] A few, out of the myriad of expressions of this dogma, were: Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 3–5, 9–11, 14, 17–18, 23–34, 37–43; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953–5, vol. II, 'Natsionalizm' and 'Natsiya', pp. 471, 475; *Kratkiy slovar po filosifii*, 4th ed., Moscow, 1982, p. 206; R. Krickus, 'Lithuania: nationalism in the modern era', in Bremmer and Taras, *Nations and Politics in*, pp. 157, 159; A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 8–11, 129–34.

[17] H. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: an Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, London, 1977, pp. xii, 482.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 470.

[19] V. V. Karpov, 'Improving nationality relations', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 9 March 1988, pp. 2–3, *CDSP*, vol. 40, no. 11, pp. 5–7, 28; N. Mishina, 'S tochnostyu do cheloveka', *Pravda*, 6 December 1988; *Pravda*, 8 January 1989, quoted by B. Nahaylo, 'Gorbachev disavows merging of nations', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 5, pp. 23, 24; A. Sheehy, 'Ethnic Muslims account for half of Soviet population increase', *RFE/RL*, 1990, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 15–16.

[20] M. Beissinger and L. Hajda, 'Nationalism and reform in Soviet politics', in Beissinger and Hajda, *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society*, Boulder, 1990, pp. 313–14.

[21] 'Samaya politicheskaya karta SSSR', *Moskovskiye novosti*, 1991, no. 11, 17 March, pp. 8–9.

[22] See Ch. 13 for the formation of the USSR's ethnic territories.

[23] Rauch, *History*, pp. 340–1, 351–7, 363–4, 375–9, 381–2.

[24] *European Security Conference: Third and Final Stage in Helsinki, September 1–7, 1975. Conference's Final Act*, Cmnd. 6198, *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 1975, pp. 27301–7.

[25] Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya v vlasti*, pp. 641, 651.

[26] United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Done at Paris on 21 November 1990*, *Done at Paris on 21 November 1990, with Statement by…Margaret Thatcher…on 19 November 1990* (Cm 1464), London, 1990.

[27] A. Sheehy, 'Fact sheet on declarations of sovereignty', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 45, pp. 23–5.

[28] RSFSR constitutional amendments of 15 December 1990 and 3 July 1991, *RFE/RL*, 1992, vol. 1, no. 24, p. 14.

[29] RSFSR constitutional amendment of 3 July 1991, *RFE/RL*, 1992, vol. 1, no. 24, p. 14.

[30] M. S. Gorbachov, ‘O natsionalnoy politike partii v sovremennykh usloviyakh: doklad na Plenume TsK KPSS’, *Pravda*, 20 September 1989; A. Sheehy, ‘Gorbachov addresses Central Committee Plenum on nationalities question’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 39, pp. 1–4.

[31] Fuller, ‘Nationalist protest’, no. 28, pp. 1–3.

[32] G. Amkuab and T. Ilarionova, compilers, *Abkhaziya: khronika neob”yavlennoy voyny*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1992, vol. I, pp. 7–8; Fuller, ‘Nationalist protest’, p. 2; A. Gogua, ‘Nasha trevoga’, *Druzhba narodov*, 1989, no. 5, p. 158.

[33] *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953–5, vol. I, p. 484; vol. III, p. 186; *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, pp. 348, 1197; Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, p. 277.

18 Armenia, Karabagh, Azerbaijan

War over Highland Karabagh

Up to the 1980s the Armenians were generally considered to be Russia's most loyal subjects, since they owed their survival as a nation to it. Not entirely the victimized, pacific nation portrayed by their apologists, Armenian exiles perpetrated terrorist acts, mainly against Turks, but three Armenians were executed in the 1970s for allegedly planting a bomb in the Moscow underground railway.[1] The Soviet Armenians nursed one particularly strong historical grievance against Russia. They claim as historically Armenian lands which were allotted by the Russian government to the Azerbaijan SSR in the 1920s: the Highland Karabagh AP and the Nakhchavan ASSR – the former integrated into Azerbaijan and isolated from Armenia, the latter subordinated to Azerbaijan but separated from it by a strip of Armenia (Zangezur). The Soviet government's delimitation of the areas of Armenian and Azerbaijanian settlement left big discrepancies between the administrative-territorial and ethnic maps of 'Transcaucasia'. While Georgians lived almost entirely within their own republic, 8% of Georgia's population in 1989 were Armenians and 6% Azerbaijanis, living mainly in southern areas. Small Armenian communities were scattered everywhere, but were particularly numerous in Azerbaijan, making up about 6% of its population, not only in Baku and Highland Karabagh, but also north-westwards from the latter to Armenia's border on Lake Sevan. Very few Armenian settlements remained in the Nakhchavan ASSR, constituting only 1.5% of its population, but in Highland Karabagh 77% were Armenians. In Armenia itself more than 3% of inhabitants were Azerbaijanis, living mainly north of Lake Sevan. Within Highland Karabagh Azerbaijanis formed 22% of the population.[2]

The first major conflict between non-Russian nationalities arose in 1987 from rival claims of Azerbaijan and Armenia to Highland Karabagh, with Azerbaijanis supporting a historian who restated the view that Azerbaijan, not Armenia, was the rightful heir to ancient Caucasian Albania – a rather abstruse controversy, based on scattered comments in early texts, in which the intervention of Andrey Sakharov on the Armenian side evoked extreme vituperation from Azerbaijan.[3] Violence broke out on 20 February 1988, after the provincial council representing the Armenians of Karabagh[4] voted for union with Armenia, and asked the Azerbaijanian, Armenian and USSR governments to sanction this. This resolution was the culmination of many Karabagh Armenian appeals to Moscow from the 1960s to 1987.[5] The Armenians' proposal to take over Highland Karabagh stirred nationalist passions in Azerbaijan, and young Azerbaijanis from Aghdam raided Armenian villages in Karabagh, causing two deaths and many injuries. The ensuing struggle over Karabagh reflected the perceptions and prejudices of both communities, and of the Moscow government.

In Sumgayt – Azerbaijan's industrial new town dominated by chemical, metallurgical and engineering works which, according to some Azerbaijanis, 'had absorbed all the negative consequences of accelerated and mindless industrialization'[6] – the mob violence against Armenians arose partly from social conditions among people brought in from rural districts to live in industrial shantytowns,[7] who were easily incited to attack Armenians: thirty-two were murdered, others raped and hundreds wounded.[8]

Whether most Azerbaijanis condemned the killings, or few felt any ‘shame or even corporate responsibility’, and some even accused the Armenians themselves of organizing the massacre to evoke public sympathy for their cause,[9] the Armenians complained of systematic Azerbaijani oppression and Baku's failure to provide social and cultural facilities for the Armenians in Highland Karabagh – which one Russian politician described as ‘one of the most neglected areas’ of the USSR he had ever seen.[10]

The Azerbaijanis wanted Highland Karabagh for its fertile soil, deciduous forests, pleasant climate and health resorts providing relief from the arid heat of the eastern plains. They therefore played down the Armenians’ historical place in Karabagh and Nakhchavan: in 1914 Armenians had formed nearly 40% of the population of the latter (and by 1926 only 11%!), but this fact was now generally ignored.[11] To match emotive assertions by the Armenians of historical rights to the territory, the Azerbaijani nationalists claimed that the whole of Karabagh, ‘in indissoluble, inseparable totality’, ‘the cradle of Azerbaijanian poetry, music and song’, was ‘our country from time immemorial and for evermore’.[12] However, apart from rhetoric, and the fact of its present integration into the Azerbaijanian economy, Azerbaijanis presented little evidence to back up their claim. On the other hand, the historical justification for allocating Highland Karabagh to Armenia was strong and, as the decisions improvised by British officers in 1918–21 had been quite arbitrary, it was at least questionable why, if the separate territory of Nakhchavan was subordinated to Azerbaijan, the largely Armenian Highland Karabagh should not be subordinated to Armenia.[13] Moscow, however, in its propaganda of fraternal harmony, had suppressed all historical reference to Azerbaijanian--Armenian conflicts, so that, for instance, even the authorized *History of the Armenian People* ignored entirely the 1918–21 negotiations.[14] Consequently, Highland Karabagh's resolve to unite with the Armenian SSR was dismissed by Gorbachov. In March 1988 the USSR Supreme Soviet ruled out *any* change in existing administrative borders, and resorted to stock phrases about ‘Leninist principles in nationalities policy’, and especially the assertion of ‘friendship and unity between the peoples of the USSR’ – the absence of which was precisely what events in Transcaucasia were graphically demonstrating.[15] Gorbachov simply kept repeating that Armenia had no claim to Highland Karabagh, which belonged to Azerbaijan, but, understandably, the Armenian Supreme Soviet refused to accept this and in July 1988, supported by crowds around the Yerevan parliament building, voted to unite Highland Karabagh with the Armenian SSR under its Armenian name ‘Artsakh’.[16]

Apart from the fact that Azerbaijan with its larger population and major oil industry stood much higher on the conventional scale of political importance than Armenia, the rulers of the USSR, exploiting the Helsinki Accords, were determined to avoid any precedent for reconsidering questionable internal boundaries and subordination of territories – lest, for instance, the arbitrary Polish frontier or the illegal inclusion of the Königsberg--Tilsit region in ‘Kaliningrad province’ of the Rossiyan Republic should be raised. Moscow's investigatory commissions simply rejected flexibility or compromise, asserting that Armenian claims were ‘an abuse of freedom of public opinion’ and that the existing frontiers of Azerbaijan and Armenia were sacrosanct – a hard line which was sure to enflame Armenian passions and lead to an armed conflict. Perhaps, however, Gorbachov was genuinely incapable of imagining that belligerent passions could be stirred up by a mere ‘minority's’ patriotism.[17]

If the Armenians had grown bolder in reasserting loyalty to their cultural heritage, including the Gregorian Apostolic Church, the Azerbaijanis similarly experienced a revival of interest in Islam, echoing the contemporary resurgence of fundamentalist Shi^{c}ism in Iran. Mosques were reopened, and in 1989 an edition of the Koran in Arabic and Azerbaijani was published (by the Azerbaijanian Communist Party publishing house!). Thus the old Christian and Muslim prejudices undoubtedly exacerbated the situation,[18] as did historic memories of ethnic antagonism, since Armenians inevitably associated Azerbaijanis with the Turks who had massacred Armenians in the past.[19]

Unrest continued after Moscow's failure to consider any compromise on the Karabagh problem, and USSR troops were sent there to ‘impose order’.[20] In the Armenian SSR the veteran dissident Paruir Hairikyan of the Union for National Self-Determination was arrested in March 1988 and exiled to the USA, while the Karabagh Committee (recently founded by S. KaP̣utikyan, I. Muradyan and others) won so much public support that it threatened the Armenian KP's monopoly of power, and all its leaders were arrested in December. By then the Armenians had expelled from the Armenian SSR most of its 20,000 Azerbaijani inhabitants.[21]

Skirmishing continued between Azerbaijani and Armenian villages in Highland Karabagh, and in Baku demonstrations began again in November as a result of reported intrusion by the Armenian SSR into Karabagh. After Azerbaijan demanded that Highland Karabagh be deprived of its autonomous status, the mood was so ugly that MVD troops were sent to guard Armenian residents. Fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijanis also broke out in Ganja (Kirovabad) and Nakhchavan.[22]

The Azerbaijanis did not create any political organization until July 1989, and it was the Armenians' claim to Highland Karabagh, rather than an anti-communist movement, that 'finally overcame…apathy in Azerbaijan and led to to the development of popular and nationalist groups'.[23] The Azerbaijanian Popular Front, led by Elchibey (Abulfäz Aliyev), which became the main focus of political activity, was strongly nationalistic and Turcophile, and it organized many anti-Armenian actions, especially the economic blockade of Karabagh and the Armenian republic.[24] Ultimately, however, it was Moscow's 'vacillation and confusion during the early part of the crisis in 1988 and Gorbachev's desperate and inept efforts to keep a crumbling union together' that exacerbated Armenian--Azerbaijani strife.[25]

From 1989 onwards an undeclared war between Armenia and Azerbaijan affected Highland Karabagh and neighbouring districts with Armenian populations, such as Khanlar, Shamkhor, Artsvashen (Bashkend), Kazakh (Gazakh), Aghdam, Lachin and Shaumyanovsk (which until 1928 had been part of Highland Karabagh and in August 1989 voted to rejoin it). Both communities resorted to stoning police and military vehicles, making guerrilla raids on villages, murdering peasants in the fields, tampering with domestic water supplies, and destroying homes. There were gun battles between villages, ambushes and bomb attacks on troop convoys and public transport, attacks on police stations and military bases with the aim of stealing weapons, and mining of roads and bridges. Russian Army, MVD and KGB troops continued to 'impose order' – i.e. the territorial status quo. Random executions and revenge killings became common, hostages were taken, and inhabitants of captured towns and villages were murdered or driven out. Azerbaijanis and Armenians attacking each other's town and village strongholds eventually used heavy artillery, helicopter gunships and tanks.[26] Meanwhile the Azerbaijanis, having control of the pipelines, deprived the Armenians of oil and gas and starved them of other supplies by a road and rail blockade. On the other hand, Armenians made cross-border raids to annex Armenian enclaves in Azerbaijanian territory or to smuggle weapons and personnel into Karabagh for paramilitary units set up there.[27]

By February 1989 more than 90 people had been killed and 1,650 wounded in fighting over Karabagh, and soon there were nearly 500,000 refugees: Armenians fleeing to Armenia from Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijanis escaping from the enmity of Armenians in Highland Karabagh and the Armenian SSR.[28] The existing accommodation and food problems in both republics worsened, and normal life was disrupted for everyone – including Russian inhabitants.[29] Azerbaijan's control of the transport system put the Armenian republic and, especially, Highland Karabagh at the mercy of Azerbaijan. The main gas pipeline from Baku ran westwards to Georgia, with branches to Armenia, one of which passed through Georgia's Marneuli district with its preponderantly Azerbaijani population, who repeatedly blew up the pipeline and derailed trains.[30] Highland Karabagh was especially vulnerable because the gas pipeline and the railway to Stepanakert could be blockaded, and the motor road from

Armenia in the south passed through Azerbaijani territory at Lachin. This stranglehold on Armenian supply lines caused severe economic difficulties until 1992, when Armenian military successes culminated in the capture of Lachin, establishing a corridor between Armenia and Karabagh.[31]

Meanwhile outsiders attempted to dictate terms. In January 1989 Highland Karabagh was taken under the direct control of Moscow's Supreme Soviet, with the introduction of 5,000 more Russian troops.[32] This suited neither side: in August 1989 the Karabagh Armenians declared secession from Azerbaijan as an independent ASSR, while Azerbaijan reasserted its rule and demanded an end to Moscow's ‘interference’. On 1 December 1989 the Armenian Supreme Soviet went further and declared the annexation of Highland Karabagh to the ‘United Republic of Armenia’ – whereupon the Azerbaijanis asserted an ‘indissoluble link’ of Karabagh with the republic of Azerbaijan. As Azerbaijanis and Armenians remained locked in inconclusive warfare, the Baku government abolished Highland Karabagh's autonomous status in 1992 and declared it a province of Azerbaijan.[33]

Efforts to resolve the conflict by negotiation continued to be organized by the two republics’ unofficial political groups, meeting in Riga, Tbilisi and Leningrad, and in 1991, when Karabagh Armenian officials indicated willingness for dialogue, discussions were initiated by Yeltsin and President N. Nazarbayev of Kazakstan.[34] After the collapse of the USSR there were attempts at mediation by many outside bodies, including the UN and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, sometimes leading to temporary ceasefires, but the Highland Karabagh problem remained unresolved.[35]

Azerbaijan from restructuring to independence

Azerbaijan showed that it had awoken from political torpor in September 1989 when, unexpectedly, it became one of the first SSRs to declare its sovereignty, very soon after the organization of a Popular Front, in what until then had been 'one of the most prosperous and peaceful Soviet republics' – and seemingly 'one of the most apolitical'.[36] The Popular Front's goals included not only democracy, human rights and political sovereignty, but also the distribution of land to the peasants. However, the Azerbaijanian Popular Front is said to have differed from those in the Baltic republics or Ukraine in arising not from the coalescence of existing groups, but from the decision of a collection of individuals enjoying 'only tenuous support from the Baku intelligentsia and relatively little control over the popular movement on whose shoulders it had risen to prominence'.[37] The political sentiments of Azerbaijanis in the mass remained narrowly fixated on territorial sovereignty and antagonism towards Armenians,[38] little desire was expressed for secession from the USSR, and the country continued to be governed by only slightly liberalized KPSS bureaucrats who, despite Azerbaijan's early début in *perestroyka*, staved off real political change. Nevertheless, the gulf between the KP and the newly politicized masses was widening, and in autumn 1989 the Popular Front forced Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet and its Russophile first secretary, Abdurrahman Vezirov, to accept constitutional amendments on sovereignty, economic independence and democratic elections, and to abolish Moscow's administrative committee for Highland Karabagh.[39]

Moscow's apparent favouring of Azerbaijan was negated by military intervention in January 1990, which demonstrated that Moscow was impartial only in being equally indifferent to the political fate of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. In autumn and winter of 1989 there was a great deal of turmoil in Azerbaijan, affecting not only Highland Karabagh but also many other places from Baku to Nakhchavan in the south-west and from Kirovabad/Ganja to Lankaran in the south-east – in all of which Azerbaijani nationalist demonstrations against local KP bosses occurred. Particular excitement was generated in Nakhchavan, along the Iranian border on the river Araxes, where the desire to abolish the frontier and allow long-separated Azerbaijanis on both sides to meet each other led to unprecedented events which panicked the KPSS security forces: the frontier was breached by euphoric crowds, fences and guard-posts were dismantled, and for the first time in 70 years people crossed the bridges over the Araxes freely. Predictably, Russia's news media described the participants in this spree as 'extremists' intoxicated with alcohol and drugs, or infiltrators carrying weapons into Nakhchavan from Iran, rather than ordinary people of all ages who wanted to see life on the other side of the Iron Curtain. It took MVD border guards weeks to restore 'order' and reassure Moscow that, with the barbed wire replaced, the situation had returned to 'normal'.[40]

Meanwhile in Baku mass demonstrations demanding greater independence for Azerbaijan and control over Karabagh led to fighting and the death of at least sixty Armenians. Because of this violence, on 15 January 1990 the USSR Supreme Soviet declared a state of emergency in Azerbaijan, and sent some 17,000 security troops to Baku. Here they encountered barricades set up by the Popular Front, and four days later, using tanks in a night assault, they forced their way into the city centre, while Soviet garrison troops broke out from their barracks. In the fighting 139 Azerbaijani citizens were killed and 498 wounded.[41]

In justification of this severe intervention the Moscow government said the state of emergency had been declared to protect Armenians (many of whom were evacuated from Baku by sea to Turkmenistan), and that the Soviet troops had prevented war between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The USSR Defence Ministry used Gorbachovian rhetoric: the troops had thwarted plans by ‘criminal, extremist forces’ of the Popular Front – supposedly including 40,000 heavily armed ‘militants’ – driven by ‘personal ambition and lust for power’ to seize power in Azerbaijan. Later, after Heydar Aliyev's condemnation of the Soviet Russian invasion, Gorbachov shifted the blame to sinister underlying forces: the hidden hand of the ‘shadow economy’ and the republican ‘mafia’, incited by H. Aliyev.[42]

The Azerbaijani communist establishment (under its new leader A. Mutalibov) justified Russia's armed intervention by blaming it on the Armenians’ claim to Highland Karabagh and their rejection of Azerbaijan's ‘sincere desire for a peaceful settlement’. They also blamed Moscow for softening its original inflexibility on the Karabagh question, instead of recognizing this as an ‘internal matter’ for the Azerbaijanian republic.[43] Although the Russian invasion caused one-third of Azerbaijanian communists to renounce KPSS membership,[44] the republic's KP, now backed by large numbers of Soviet troops, managed to retain its dominant influence, partly by ‘acquiring a nationalist garb’. Thus the Azerbaijanian KP survived, and ‘beneath the new rhetoric many of the old mindsets and attitudes’ continued to affect outlook and policy for years to come,[45] including Azerbaijani antagonism towards Armenians, fostered by the republican government under H. Aliyev and K. Baghyrov which, as we have seen, had had Azerbaijan's history rewritten in a nationalist (and Aliyevist) spirit.[46]

Heydar Aliyev's re-emergence from enforced retirement in 1990 at the age of 67 revealed him as an arch-opportunist, adroit in adapting himself to changes in the political environment in order to regain power. In this he resembled his counterparts in the Central Asian republics who ostensibly took the lead in democratization while in fact presiding over the continuation of the old, corrupt system of government which allowed KPSS leaders to become what Yeltsin described as ‘millionaire bribe-takers’.[47]

Azerbaijan, where ‘corruption and nepotism…[had] been hallmarks of political life…for decades’,[48] at this time of official democratization showed a marked absence of democracy among KP bosses, who may have manipulated even the Highland Karabagh tragedy to their own ends.[49]

First Secretaries of the Azerbaijanian KP had succeeded each other rapidly after Aliyev's departure for Moscow in 1982, each successive one condemning the venality of his predecessor while himself emulating his wrongdoing. Baghyrov's dismissal in 1990 had been part of Gorbachov's attempt to reform the KPSS from within and break the power of its entrenched bureaucracy, and Vezirov was installed to overcome ‘enemies of restructuring’ whose inaction over social problems Gorbachov attributed to ‘corrupt clans’ and the shadow economy. However, Vezirov also represented the interests of the communist ‘mafia’ against Popular Front politicians, and his subservience to Moscow made his resignation obligatory after the Russian intervention in Baku in January 1990.[50] His successor, Mutalibov (concurrently chairman of the republic's Supreme Soviet), although elected on a wave of anti-Russian feeling and mass desertion from the KPSS, was, like Gorbachov, still dedicated to salvaging the party's authority and counteracting Popular Front demands for autonomy. The Azerbaijanian Supreme Soviet's first multi-party elections took place in September 1990, with some violence and official manipulation, and were no triumph for democracy, since the KP gained 240 of the 350 seats, while only about 15 Democratic Forum representatives were elected. If democracy did not suit the Azerbaijani ex-communist establishment, independence of action from Moscow did, so that in December 1990 the name Azerbaijan Republic was adopted instead of ‘Azerbaijanian SSR’, and its Supreme Soviet declared that henceforth all matters connected with Highland Karabagh were exclusively the business of Azerbaijan, not Moscow.[51]

In August 1991, Mutalibov at first supported the attempted Moscow conspiracy, then denied that he had – despite the fact that he had had members of the democratic movement arrested. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet declared the republic's independence, and within a few days, after a single-candidate election, Mutalibov became its president. His dubious career continued with enforced resignation in March 1992 over a massacre of Azerbaijanis in Karabagh, and brief reinstatement by coup in May as his faction repulsed swelling support for the Popular Front – which promptly ousted him again.[52] The election of the Front's candidate, the democratic intellectual Elchibey, to the presidency in June 1992 appeared to mark the end of communist power in Azerbaijan, but as he failed to cope with economic problems and political divisions, support for him dwindled. A year later Elchibey was ejected by a military coup and fled to Nakhchavan, and his place as president was taken by Heydar Aliyev. This outcome of the republic's political musical chairs was scarcely surprising, considering the steps Aliyev had taken since 1987. After lying dormant for two years, he had emerged in January 1990 to condemn the Russian military intervention and launch an attack on

Mutalibov. In September he was elected to the Azerbaijanian Supreme Soviet by a large majority to represent his home district in Nakhchavan, and in July 1991, *before* the Moscow coup, he made a timely resignation from the KPSS, piously condemning a body which had nurtured him well for 50 years. His explanation that the socialist experiment had failed, and that the KP in Azerbaijan must abandon its monopoly of power, while true, was inevitably dismissed as hypocritical by former colleagues. In September 1991 Heydar Aliyev was elected chairman of the Nakhchavan parliament, and it was from this power base that he engineered a coup in June 1993 and had himself installed as president of Azerbaijan with the coup leader, Colonel Surat Huseynov, as his prime minister.[53]

Ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan

Nearly 83% of Azerbaijan's population registered as Azerbaijanis in 1989, but there were considerable numbers of other nationalities. Apart from 390,505 Armenians (5.6% of the total, mainly in Karabagh), there were Russians (5.6% of the total) mainly living in Baku, where they formed 18% of inhabitants. Of the indigenous Caucasian peoples, many had been omitted from census data between 1926 and 1989. The Iranian-speaking Talesh, numbering about 21,000, occupied the south-east, near the border with Iran (in which 100,000 of their compatriots lived), and formed a national movement for a ‘Talesh--Mughan republic’. Most of the non-Azerbaijani population, however, such as the 10,000 Tats (like the Talesh, an Iranian-speaking people), lived north-east of Baku, especially around the borders of Daghestan.[54]

Another ‘lost’ ethnic community without a designated territory in the south of ‘Transcaucasia’ were the Kurds, and although only 12,200 lived in Azerbaijan, the fact that from 1923 to 1929 there had been a Kurdish District with at least nominal autonomy from the Araxes north to Lachin, Kelbajar and beyond, on the western border of Karabagh (which could be useful to its Armenian inhabitants in protecting their vulnerable road link with Armenia), focussed attention on this. They began to argue for their rights in 1988, and in 1990 a national conference was convened in Moscow by an All-Union Kurdish Unity (Yakbun) Committee requesting a national territory where all Kurds in the USSR could settle. In May 1992, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Kurds in Moscow demonstrated for the revival of the Kurdish autonomous district in Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, this minority independence movement added to the Kurds' general problem of obtaining a recognized homeland in territories which had been fixed by post-First World War frontier agreements as belonging to Turkey, Syria, Iraq or Iran. Azerbaijan seems no more likely than these countries to be sympathetic to the idea of establishing a Kurdish homeland.[55]

Lezgis formed the largest minority, with almost as many living in Azerbaijan (171,400) as in Daghestan (204,400). The Gorbachov reforms led to the appearance of the Lezgi Unity (Sadval) movement, and in December 1991 a National Congress demanded the unification of the two communities in one autonomous republic of Lezgistan. However, there was little chance of this succeeding against the power of Azerbaijani nationalism. Lezgian hopes of redrawing the frontier were also undermined by Yeltsin's making former USSR inter-republican borders (in this case that between Daghestan and Azerbaijan) the state frontiers of the Rossiyan Federation. Other Daghestanian minorities in Azerbaijan included over 44,000 Avars and 13,000 Tsakhurs who formed more than 50% of the population in the north-western districts of Zakatala and Gakh, which had been transferred from Georgia to Azerbaijan in 1921 although its Azerbaijani population was very small and it was historically Georgian.[56]

Independent Azerbaijan

During these turbulent years in Azerbaijan, when nationalist dismissal of the Armenian case for permitting the secession of Highland Karabagh diverted the country's energies away from useful reconstruction, many significant changes nevertheless occurred. As elsewhere, Gorbachov's reforms permitted the rediscovery of suppressed aspects of national history. In 1988 articles began to appear in praise of the Azerbaijanian Democratic Republic of 1918–20 and its liberal statesmen, especially Räsulzadä, with the message that, like others, 'the Azerbaijani nation has the right to live freely within its own frontiers'.[57] Russian place-names were abolished in favour of the original Azerbaijani names, particularly Ganja instead of 'Kirovabad'.[58] The growing reassertion of Azerbaijani national identity brought new life to the Azerbaijani language: its status, its teaching and its teachers (who had received lower salaries than teachers of Russian in the republic) formed one theme of the mass demonstrations and press protests of 1988. Since here, as elsewhere, official neglect of the native language during the 'stagnant years' had had a dire effect, it was announced that measures would be taken against senior officials who had a poor, or non-existent, command of Azerbaijani and preferred to use Russian (such as Vezirov).[59]

Another aspect of Soviet rule which had undermined the study of Azerbaijani language in schools and scholarly access to pre-Soviet books and archives was, as in all Turkic and Central Asian republics, the double change of alphabet since

1920. The Cyrillic alphabet imposed from 1937 had few supporters, especially because it differed from one Turkic language to another, with the no doubt intentional aim of obscuring mutual intelligibility. Discussion began in Uzbekistan in 1987, quickly followed by Tatarstan, Azerbaijan and other republics, of the replacement of this Russian-based alphabet with the Roman alphabet, as in Turkey, or the earlier Arabic script. The latter, however desirable it was for Islamic and historical studies – and for Azerbaijanis with a strong wish for union with Persian Azerbaijan, since it would bring them closer to their cousins – was difficult to justify, because few people there now knew Arabic script. Consequently, in 1990 Azerbaijani intellectuals proposed that Russian script should be replaced with Roman,[60] and in December 1992 Elchibey's government decreed the adoption for all purposes (including the new Azerbaijan bank notes) of a version of the Roman alphabet corresponding closely to that of Turkish.[61] Emulation of Turkey went further than the alphabet: Elchibey decreed that the language of Azerbaijan must be called 'Turkic'.[62] Similarly, many Azerbaijanis now wanted to call themselves 'Turks' or 'Azerbaijani Turks' – names which had previously been used, but which had been banned since 1937 for political reasons.[63]

The beginning of the 1990s saw the emergence of Azerbaijan on to the international stage through the establishment of relations with both Turkey and Iran. Mutalibov visited Tehran and concluded a treaty on political, economic, cultural and scientific co-operation in December 1991, while independent Azerbaijan's links with Turkey began with Prime Minister Hasan Hasanov's visit to Ankara in September 1990 and the signing of a treaty on communications and diplomatic representation.[64] Elchibey's year as president, with policies based on democracy, Turkism and Islam, marked the culmination of the ‘pro-Turkish euphoria’, during which the old pan-Turkic ideal of ‘Turan’ emerged again, but the appointment of Aliyev brought a return to a tactical accommodation with Russia.[65]

By then the Azerbaijanian government was looking beyond its immediate neighbours to wider Asian economic groupings and a proposed agreement between Iran, Turkey and Pakistan. At first foreign countries, apart from Turkey, were slow to grant independent Azerbaijan recognition, but in March 1992 it attained membership of the UN.[66]

Armenia after 1987

The Armenian republic during the collapse of the Soviet Russian empire showed a greater coherence of political initiatives than Azerbaijan or Georgia. Ethnically it was the most homogeneous of the Transcaucasian republics, 90% of its inhabitants in 1979 being Armenian, and 71% having lived in the same place since birth. Russians constituted only 2.3%, and Azerbaijanis 5.3% of its inhabitants. Ten years later, after the Highland Karabagh troubles began, 93% of Armenia's population were Armenians, while Azerbaijanis were reduced to 2.6%.[67]

The new First Secretary of the Armenian KP appointed in 1988, Suren Harutyunyan, quickly gained popularity by his support for the unification of Highland Karabagh with Armenia.[68] At the KPSS Conference in July 1988 his indictment of the previous Armenian SSR government for economic stagnation, social deprivation, lack of leadership, protectionism, nepotism and corruption in high places, with only a pretence of restructuring,[69] was perhaps a predictable ritual, but soon Harutyunyan took up the convictions of the Armenian Supreme Soviet's chairman, Hrant Voskanyan. The latter, at a special meeting of the USSR Supreme Soviet in July 1988, rejected Gorbachov's facile view of Armenia's position on Highland Karabagh as ‘extremism’ and denied that Armenia was making territorial claims: it was simply asserting the constitutional right of nations of the USSR to self-determination.[70] In September, at the KPSS plenum on nationalities policy, Harutyunyan echoed these sentiments, saying that it was a caprice of history that ‘our people is divided into parts which are drawn towards each other’. Amid stock phrases about ‘glaring distortions in nationalities policy revealed by *glasnost* and *perestroyka*’, Harutyunyan clearly implied that the blame for the existence in Transcaucasia of masses of refugees, widespread bloodshed and the economic blockade of one republic by another lay with the Moscow authorities, who were doing nothing constructive to solve the problem, while suppressing truthful media coverage of events.[71] As these two top communist officials in Armenia were united in their attitude towards Moscow, and their general support for Armenia's national democratic movement was clear, friction between the Armenian KP and the political opposition was less intense than in other republics.[72] However, Harutyunyan's ‘compromise’ proposal that Highland Karabagh should be given the status of an autonomous territory subordinated not to Azerbaijan but to Moscow displeased the nationalists, who desired a ‘greater Armenia’, including even provinces that had long ago been annexed to Turkey. Even more ambiguous was the position of Armenia's next government, which had to profess non-involvement in the fighting for Highland Karabagh while continuing to support the general thesis of the rightness of Karabagh's cause in pursuing secession from Azerbaijan and union with Armenia.

Meanwhile, in April 1990 Gorbachov removed Harutyunyan from his post as First Secretary and substituted the less independent-minded Vladimir Movsisyan.[73]

There had already been conflict between the Armenian popular movement and the KPSS over the state's treatment of political dissidents in 1978, when ‘anti-Soviet’ views were silenced by the imprisonment of the Armenian Helsinki Watch group. Non-conformism reasserted itself in 1987 – at first, as in other republics, over environmental issues: industrial pollution, the Nairit chemical works and Metsamor nuclear power station.[74] From the start, however, the question of Highland Karabagh was raised at every rally, and from February 1988, when Karabagh voted to join Armenia, this became the dominant theme of demonstrations in Yerevan. An important event was a general strike and occupation of Yerevan's Zvartnots airport in July 1988, organized by the Karabagh Committee. The use of MVD troops to attack the demonstrators only fuelled the flames and evoked explicitly anti-communist, anti-Russian sentiments, and this in turn led to a schism in the democratic movement, as many moderate intellectuals condemned the Karabagh Committee's extreme line and stopped supporting it.[75] The Armenian government, still subservient to Moscow, was meanwhile obliged to make arrests. In July 1988 the leader of the Armenian Union for Self-Determination, Paruir Hairikyan, was expelled from the USSR and, as demonstrations and strikes occurred daily in Yerevan, further steps were taken to reimpose order in the Soviet style. At the end of November the editor of the periodical *Free Speech*, Sergey Grigoryants, was imprisoned for breaking the curfew and filming Soviet troops suppressing a demonstration, and in December the whole Karabagh Committee was arrested and imprisoned in Moscow.[76] For the next six months their detention became ‘the most salient aspect of life in Armenia’, so that on their release in May 1989 they were ‘virtually sanctified in the eyes of most Armenians’.[77] The patriotic, pro-independence tone of demonstrations became more pronounced. One theme – opposition to Russian communist rule – was first made explicit negatively when, as in several other republics, no May Day parade was held in Yerevan in 1989 or thereafter. On the other hand, the anniversary of Armenia's declaration of independence in May 1918 was celebrated openly for the first time. From December 1989 the KPSS's assumption of its ‘right to rule’ became a specific target of the Armenian movement, and by August 1990 demands were being voiced for secession from the USSR.[78] The other innovation which emerged was mass commemoration of victims of Turkish genocide, for which an annual day of remembrance was instituted in April 1989. In 1990 this event in Yerevan's Tṣitṣernaḳaberd (Swallows’ Castle) Park attracted a crowd of 200,000 people.[79]

These patriotic manifestations accompanied the Armenian government's attempts to create democratic institutions, focussing in the first place on the republic's Supreme Soviet elections scheduled for May 1990. While it appeared encouraging that one-third of candidates were put forward by grass-roots meetings of residents – the highest proportion in any SSR except Estonia[80] – there was still much apathy and some irregularities, but after several rounds of voting it emerged in July that non-communist deputies formed the majority in the new parliament.[81] However, the anti-communist Armenian movement was far from united: in 1989 several Armenian political groups led by liberated Karabagh Committee members had combined to form the Armenian Pan-National Movement (APNM), but in

August the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsyutyun) re-emerged, and in November the more radical Union for National Self-Determination (UNSD) was founded under the leadership of P. Hairikyan. The APNM agreed to form a coalition government with the local KP, and its leader, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, was elected chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet.[82]

Unfortunately, as violent conflict became more intense in and around Highland Karabagh during 1990, so did lawlessness in the Armenian SSR itself. Extreme nationalist paramilitaries, after ambushing and abducting Soviet security troops in order to seize weapons and vehicles, not only launched attacks on Azerbaijani villages near the border, but in Yerevan they also raided the Armenian Supreme Soviet building, injuring the chairman, and besieged the main KP building, demanding that elections be postponed until a multi-party system was introduced. As a protest against the Soviet security forces' failure to prevent the invasion of the Supreme Soviet, a crowd stormed Yerevan's KGB headquarters.[83] Several rival paramilitary organizations came to blows among themselves: on 30 June 1990 a clash between two groups left one dead and two wounded, and in August street fighting between the 'Armenian National Army' (ANA) and the APNM claimed at least seven lives.[84]

The Armenian government was faced with a predicament in trying to curb this violence. It had little control over the armed groups, and the only troops it could call upon were those of the Soviet MVD – which was dedicated to reimposing Moscow's control over rebellious citizens, and not to helping republics pursue their own path to democracy and sovereignty. Thus in June 1990 the Armenian government, rightly suspicious of the local MVD commander's offer to step in, decreed that Soviet army and MVD troops were forbidden to operate in Armenia unless specifically requested by the Supreme Soviet. Moreover, when Gorbachov decreed the disarming of all paramilitary organizations throughout the USSR on pain of being outlawed, the Armenian Supreme Soviet voted to defy this as a violation of the Armenian constitution.[85] After the installation of the new parliament, Prime Minister V. Manukyan stated that their principal task was to combat armed crime, banditry and corruption, and its chairman, Ter-Petrosyan, flew to Moscow to obtain a two-month postponement of the surrender of arms. It was only after a battle between two groups in late August that parliament proclaimed a state of emergency, and the ANA, the chief culprit, was forced to disband itself and give up its weapons. Thereafter, Ter-Petrosyan announced that many paramilitary groups had pledged allegiance to parliament and would form the basis of Armenia's national army.[86]

Although relative calm returned to the streets of Yerevan, acts of banditism still occurred. The UNSD in particular continued to use the city as their headquarters for overt and clandestine operations against Azerbaijanis, especially in support of Highland Karabagh. However, Russian attempts to place all blame for the violence on Armenian guerrilla detachments and the Russian military's apparent policy of siding with Azerbaijanis in attacking Armenian villages (often with indiscriminate brutality against civilians) led Ter-Petrosyan to accuse Moscow of conspiring to overthrow the Armenian government. The conduct of Moscow's campaign suggested, on the one hand, that vengeance was being wreaked on Armenia for the murder of an MVD colonel in Rostov-on-Don in April 1991 by Armenian paramilitaries and, on the other, that Gorbachov, whose grip on political power was weakening, was being forced to condone violence against Armenians in Highland Karabagh by pressure from reactionary extremists in the KPSS and military establishment. This view of Gorbachov's position was confirmed by the August 1991 coup attempt.[87] In response to that event Ter-Petrosyan acted cautiously, lest immediate condemnation incur swift action by local Soviet Russian forces, but thereafter the Supreme Soviet reacted swiftly to the KPSS's role in the conspiracy by nationalizing all the party's property, and the Armenian KP soon disbanded itself. On 21 September 1991 in a national referendum 94% of the Armenian people voted for secession from the Soviet Union, and two days later the Supreme Soviet unanimously declared independence.[88]

As the experience of many other ‘successor states’ to the USSR showed, Armenia's attainment of formal independence did not make it any easier to govern. The president, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, was beset with problems on all sides. Although the Armenian Supreme Soviet – alone among its counterparts in other SSRs – had set out in March 1991 to achieve secession from the Soviet Union strictly according to the lengthy procedures invented by Gorbachov,[89] playing by the rules won it no favour in Moscow, and already in May Ter-Petrosyan said that ‘To all intents and purposes, the Soviet Union has declared war on Armenia.’[90] After the August conspiracy, all Gorbachov's plans for a new union treaty were superseded and Yeltsin proved to be more favourably inclined towards Armenia. Ter-Petrosyan signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with Moscow, but the role of CIS troops in Karabagh continued to be more pro-Azerbaijani than pro-Armenian. Internationally, Armenia received encouragement in December 1992, when the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) rated it acceptable as an applicant for assistance (depending on political stability in Transcaucasia!) because of its progress towards democracy and a market economy. Azerbaijan's rail and road blockade of Highland Karabagh and the Armenian Republic, accompanied by sabotage of the gas pipeline, continued for several years, causing severe deprivation of fuel, building materials and foodstuffs (87% of Armenia's supplies were normally brought through Azerbaijan), so that by February 1993 living conditions were extremely bad, the Yerevan government was near bankruptcy, and demonstrators were demanding Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan's resignation. In November 1995 the Armenian authorities in desperation switched on the condemned Metṣamor nuclear power station to provide energy for industry and the population.[91]

Many attempts were made to bring to an end the war with Azerbaijan, through the mediation of Moscow, the UN, Iran, Turkey and, most importantly, the CSCE (later the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), but the precondition of arranging a ceasefire was always undermined by mutual attacks or recriminations, and by the Azerbaijani and Turkish refusal to recognize the Highland Karabagh Republic, whose autonomy its Armenians were determined to defend.[92] This question also got Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan into trouble with his political opponents, as he sensibly refused to let the Armenian republic accord Highland Karabagh formal recognition as an independent republic before foreign countries did so. The more extreme Armenian parties condemned him for this supposedly ‘conciliatory stance on Karabagh’, although it was clear that he would approve any peace plan which was acceptable to the Highland Karabagh government. Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan was the object of an assassination attempt in 1992, and thereafter was accused of dictatorial tendencies, especially by the Dashnaḳs (ANSD), who wanted Armenia to claim not only Karabagh but also territory presently in Turkey. Although by

1993 the Dashnak party was considered the most popular in Armenia, Ter-Petrosyan suspended it in December 1994 because of its extremism. He survived in office for four more years, but was forced to resign because of dramatic developments in the war.[93] Since 1992 the Karabagh Armenians had aimed to link their homeland with the Armenian republic by occupying the mountainous land between the Karabagh and Zangezur ranges. By 1994 Azerbaijan's army was outclassed by the Armenians – largely because of instability in its high command, which had four different war ministers between September 1991 and March 1992 – so that, when a ceasefire did come about, it was at the request of the Azerbaijanis, not the Armenians, who proved to be tougher fighters. So, by late 1996 they held the intervening districts of Lachin, with a new road into Highland Karabagh from the Armenian Republic; Kelbajar, with its gold mines; Jebrail and Fizuli in the south; and Aghdam filling out Karabagh's territory to the east of Stepanakert. For the time being, the Armenians were the victors.[94]

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[1] Ternon, *La cause arménienne*, pp. 213–14, 225–7; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, pp. 41–3.

[2] Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, pp. 274 tab. 11.3, 559; E. Fuller, ‘What lies behind the current Armenian--Azerbaijani tensions?’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 21, pp. 12–15; Kozlov, *Natsionalnosti SSSR*, p. 126; Census 1989, cited in Bremmer and Taras, *Nations and Politics*, pp. 558, 560.

[3] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 2–3, 195; R. Chafibekov and E. Dailey, ‘Eminent scholar [T. Swietochowski] interprets Nagorno-Karabakh dispute’ [from a mildly pro-Azerbaijani

viewpoint], *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 34, pp. 26–7; *Chernyy yanvar: Baku – 1990. Dokumenty i materialy*, Baku, 1990, p. 250; Dudwick, 'Caucasian Albanians'; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 22, pp. 27–8; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, pp. 120–1. Subsequently, a strongly pro-Armenian argument was published by Aghanbegyan in Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 195.

[4] In Russian *Nagornyy Karabakh* or *Nagorno-Karabakhskaya AO* – but *not* 'Nagorno-Karabakh', which is ungrammatical. This could be translated as 'Mountain(ous)' Karabagh, but 'Upland' or 'Highland' Karabagh is preferable as this was originally one part of the much larger Karabagh region, including many mountain ranges as well as steppe.

[5] *Chernyy yanvar*, p. 248; H. R. Huttenbach, 'In support of Nagorno-Karabakh: social components of the Armenian nationalist movement', *Nationalities Papers*, 1990, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 8–11; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, pp. 118–21.

[6] *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1988, vol. 7, no. 4, p. 4.

[7] '200,000 live in Baku "shantytowns"', *Sotsialisticheskaya industriya*, 26 March 1987, *CDSP*, 1987, vol. 39, no. 14, pp. 5–6.

[8] The Soviet official press attempted a bland cover-up, saying that most of the rioters were juveniles who, like the victims, were of 'various nationalities': 'Armenia--Azerbaidzhan crisis coverage – II, III, IV', *CDSP*, 1988, vol. 40, no. 9, pp. 7–9; no. 10, pp. 17–19, 32; no. 11, pp. 8–9; no. 12, p. 11; E. Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh: the death and casualty toll to date', *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 531; 'Chas razuma i trezvykh

resheniy', *Pravda*, 5 March 1988; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 461, 472, 485, 518.

[9] F. Agamaliyev, 'Between the crescent and the cross', *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1990, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 3; G. Alibekova in *Bakinskiy rabochiy*, 9 October 1988, quoted by Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh', p. 4; M. Saroyan, 'The "Karabakh syndrome" and Azerbaijani politics', *Problems of Communism*, 1990, September/October, p. 18, n. 17.

[10] *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 422; 1989, no. 52, pp. 16–17, quoting Arkadiy Volskiy, chairman of a Special Administration Committee set up by the USSR Supreme Soviet on the authority of M. Gorbachov.

[11] Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Azerbaydzhan*, pp. 251, 256, 258. In this Soviet encyclopedic work Armenians are not mentioned at all in connection with Nakhchavan.

[12] M. Ibrahimov, 'Zemlyu ne daryat', in *Chernyy yanvar*, p. 268.

[13] F. Field, 'Nagorno-Karabagh: a constitutional conundrum', *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 313.

[14] Nersisyan, *Istoriya armyanskogo*; here the latest reference to Karabagh relates to 1826 (pp. 191, 199), and to Nakhchavan 1905 (p. 251).

[15] 'Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR refusing the re-attachment of Mountainous Karabagh to Armenia (23 March 1988)', Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, pp. 131–2. This was confirmed on 18 July: E.

Fuller, ‘Supreme Soviet Presidium debate Nagorno-Karabakh’, *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 314.

[16] R. G. Hovannisian, ‘Nationalist ferment in Armenia’, *Freedom at Issue*, 1988, November--December, no. 34, p. 34; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 323, 445, 461, 538; 1989, nos. 13, 20, 25, 27; P. Rutland, ‘Democracy and nationalism in Armenia’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 1994, vol. 46, no. 5, p. 843.

[17] Fuller, ‘Supreme Soviet Presidium debate’, pp. 4–6; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 312, 314, 538, 552.

[18] Y. Aslan, ‘Mosques reopened in Azerbaijan’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 6, pp. 16–17; *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 7–8; *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1982, vol. 1, no. 4, p. 3; 1985, vol. 4, no. 12/13, pp. 6–7; V. Guroian, ‘Faith, church and nationalism in Armenia’, *Nationalities Papers*, 1992, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 33; Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan’, pp. 238–9; W. Reese, ‘The role of the religious revival and nationalism in Transcaucasia’, *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 535; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 454; Rorlich, ‘Not by history alone’, pp. 91–6.

[19] Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan’, p. 249; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, pp. 31–2, 34, 63, 65, 69, 70–2, 77, 81, 84–90, 92, 100, 114, 117. The consistency of the latter work in naming the Azerbaijanis ‘Turco-Tatars’, ‘Azeri Turks’ and, especially, ‘Tatars’ (the obsolete and inaccurate Russian term) suggests an intention of representing the Azeris in a negative light. The reverse intention, popular especially during Azerbaijan's rapprochement with Turkey in 1992, was the adoption by Azerbaijanis of ‘Azerbaijani Turk’, ‘Turk’ and ‘Turkish’ as *positive* identities preferable to ‘Azerbaijani’: see Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, *passim*.

[20] E. Fuller, 'Recent developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute', *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 312; E. Fuller, 'Further fatality reported as new violence flares up in Nagorno-Karabakh', *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 428; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 323, 422, 434, 445, 507, 518.

[21] *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 7–8; 1990, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 2–3; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 314, 323; 1989, no. 3; 1990, no. 42; Rutland, 'Democracy and nationalism', p. 844; Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, pp. 123–8.

[22] T. Dragadze, 'Interview with Neimat Panakhov', *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 5, pp. 1–3; E. Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh: an Ulster in the Caucasus?', *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 534; E. Fuller, 'The Nemat Panakhov phenomenon – as reflected in the Azerbaijani press', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 7, pp. 3–5; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 518, 529, 535; 1989, nos. 2, 27.

[23] Hunter, 'Azerbaijan', p. 247.

[24] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 204–6; E. Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh and the rail blockade', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 41, pp. 23–5; E. Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 52, p. 17; L. Iunusova, 'The end of the Ice Age: Azerbaijan August--September 1989', *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989–90, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 9–13; M. Michaeli and W. Reese, 'The Popular Front in Azerbaijan and its program', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 34, pp. 29–32.

[25] Hunter, 'Azerbaijan', p. 249.

[26] *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 323, 422, 428, 445, 461, 507, 531; 1989, nos. 19–21, 28–34, 37, 41–2; 1990, nos. 2–4, 6, 8–9, 13–14, 16–19, 29–30, 32, 35--7, 39, 43–4; 1991, nos. 1, 3, 5, 10–12, 15, 18, 20–2, 27, 30, 32, 34, 45–6; 1992, nos. 6–8, 11–13, 18, 21, 23, 26, 31, 36, 47; etc.

[27] *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 33, 39, 41, 49; 1990, nos. 3, 7, 10, 13–14, 16–17, 19, 30, 35–7, 39, 42; 1991, nos. 12, 15; 1992, nos. 3, 7–8, 11; etc.

[28] Iunusova, 'End of the Ice Age', pp. 9–10; M. Jacobs, 'USSR faces mounting refugee problem', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 38, pp. 14–18; W. Reese, 'Refugee problem in Transcaucasia assumes alarming proportions', *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 530; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 3, 7, 9.

[29] *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 10.

[30] E. Fuller, 'The year [1989] in review: Georgia', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 52, p. 19; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 454; 1989, nos. 28, 43; 1990, nos. 5, 11.

[31] Fuller, 'Democratization threatened', 1991, no. 1, p. 44; E. Fuller, 'Transcaucasia: ethnic strife threatens democratization', *RFE/RL*, 1993, no. 1, p. 21; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 3, 15, 16, 22, 36.

[32] E. Fuller, 'The year [1989] in review: Nagorno-Karabakh', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 52, p. 17; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 4; Rutland, 'Democracy and nationalism', pp. 844, 846–7.

[33] ‘Azerbaijan – background’, *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989--90, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 7–8; Fuller, ‘Year in review: Nagorno-Karabakh’, p. 17; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 29–30, 33, 35–8, 41, 47, 49–50; 1992, no. 1.

[34] *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 36; 1990, nos. 6–8, 11, 13, 24, 37; 1991, nos. 20, 24, 44.

[35] E. Fuller, ‘Nagorno-Karabakh: internal conflict becomes international’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 11, pp. 1–5; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 2, 7, 8–16, 18–21, 24–5, 29, 30, 32–3, 36, 38, 40, 42; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, 25 May; etc.

[36] Iunusova, ‘End of the Ice Age’, pp. 9, 12–13.

[37] Saroyan, ‘Karabakh syndrome’, pp. 22, 26.

[38] Azerbaijan had a range of political groups and, later, parties, including the nationalist Yeni Müsavat (New Equality) and Yurd (Home, or Motherland) standing for democracy, sovereignty, national language and culture, and relations with Iran, as well as the Azerbaijan SDs, Greens and three groups which stood for secession from the USSR and unification with Iranian Azerbaijan: Birlik (Unity), Dirchälish (Rebirth) and Kyzylbash: Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan’, pp. 230–1, 257 n.14; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 10, 12, 29–30, 33, 37, 41; Saroyan, ‘Karabakh syndrome’, p. 23.

[39] Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan’, p. 231; Iunusova, ‘End of the Ice Age’, p. 11; Saroyan, ‘Karabakh syndrome’, pp. 14, 16, 20, 22–4, 26.

[40] Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan’, p. 233; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 1–4, 7, 10; Saroyan, ‘Karabakh syndrome’, p. 28; Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 212, 236.

[41] E. Fuller, ‘Moscow rejects Azerbaijani law on sovereignty: a moral victory for Armenia?’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 48, pp. 16–18; A. Kruzhilin, ‘Baku: do i posle prikaza’, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 7 February 1990, p. 12; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 33–8, 40, 50; 1990, nos. 4–6.

[42] *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 4–5, 7; T. Swietochowski, ‘Events in Azerbaijan’, *ASN Analysis of Current Events*, February 1990, pp. 1–2.

[43] *Chernyy yanvar*, pp. 8–10, 15, 247–8, 252–3, etc.; *Konflikt v Nagornom Karabakhe. Sbornik statey*, Baku, 1990, *passim*.

[44] E. Fuller, ‘Gorbachev's dilemma in Azerbaijan’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 5, p. 16.

[45] Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan’, p. 231.

[46] V. B. Harutyunyan, *Sobytiya v Nagornom Karabakhe*, pt. 1, pp. 18–23.

[47] *XIX konferentsiya Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuza, 28 iyunya–1 iyulya 1988g.: stenograficheskiy otchet*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1988, cited by Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, p. 99.

[48] Fuller, Fuller, ‘Gorbachev's dilemma’, pp. 14–15, 23–4.

[49] Hunter, ‘Azerbaijan’, pp. 249, 252.

[50] Fuller, ‘Supreme Soviet Presidium debates’, p. 5; Fuller, ‘Gorbachev's dilemma’, p. 14; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 472; Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, pp. 88–9; Saroyan, ‘Karabakh syndrome’, p. 19; ‘Vystupleniye tovarishcha Vezirova A. Kh.’, *Pravda*, 30 June 1988, p. 7.

[51] Fuller, ‘Gorbachev's dilemma’, p. 16; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 24, 37, 40–1, 48, 50; 1991, no. 8.

[52] E. Fuller, ‘Azerbaijan after the presidential elections’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 26, pp. 1–3; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 35–8, 43.

[53] E. Fuller, ‘The ongoing political power struggle in Azerbaijan’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 18, p. 11; Fuller, ‘Azerbaijan after the presidential elections’, pp. 5–7; Fuller, ‘Azerbaijan's relations’, pp. 53–5; Fuller, ‘Democratization threatened’, p. 42; Fuller, ‘Transcaucasia: ethnic strife threatens’, p. 20; A. Lieven, ‘Renegade colonel's revolt threatens wider Caucasian conflict’, *The Times*, 9 June 1993, p. 9; A. Lieven, ‘Turks’ dream fades as rebel colonel lays claim to Baku’, *The Times*, 22 June 1993, p. 13; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 6, pp. 1–2; nos. 30–1, 36–7, 41; 1992, no. 22; T. Swietochowski, ‘Azerbaijan after the coup’, *ASN Analysis of Current Events*, 1993, vol. 5, no. 6, pp. 1–2.

[54] Fuller, ‘Azerbaijan rediscovers’; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, ethnic map of the Caucasus between pp. 22 and 23; vol. II, ethnic map of Transcaucasia between pp. 16 and 17; *Narody mira*, p. 430; Swietochowski, ‘Azerbaijan after the coup’, p. 3; Census 1989, Minneapolis, pt. 2, pp. 484, 502, 504.

[55] E. Fuller, ‘Kurdish demands for autonomy complicate Karabakh equation’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 23, pp. 12–14; *The Kurds: Caught between Nations* (Understanding Global Issues Briefing no. 94/3), Cheltenham, 1994.

[56] Abdurahimov, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya*, pp. 411–20, 462–605; Chalidze, *Natsionalnye problemy*, pp. 193–4 n.; E. Fuller, ‘Caucasus: the Lezgin campaign for autonomy’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 41, pp. 30–2; Census 1989, Minneapolis, pt. 2, pp. 13, 484.

[57] Articles in the Azerbaijani-language magazines *Ädäbiyyat va injäsänät*, 1988, July and November; *Kommunist* (Baku), 1988, December; and *Azärbaijan*, 1989, March, quoted in A. L. Altstadt, ‘Azerbaijanis reassess their history’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 33, pp. 18–19; Y. Aslan and E. Fuller, ‘Founder of independent Azerbaijani Republic rehabilitated’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 26, pp. 20–1.

[58] *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 50.

[59] Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 197; Altstadt, ‘Azerbaijanis reassess’, p. 19; Y. Aslan and E. Fuller, ‘Azerbaijani intellectuals express concern over native language’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 9, pp. 22–3.

[60] A. L. Altstadt, ‘Azerbaijani moves towards Latin alphabet’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 29, pp. 24–5; Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 208–9; Y. Aslan, ‘Azerbaijani intellectuals discuss legacy of alphabet reforms’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 7, p. 7; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 21; A.-A. Rorlich, ‘The return of the Arabic alphabet’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 18, p. 21.

[61] *Whitaker's Almanack*, 1995, p. 812. In 1993 at a conference in Ankara representatives of Turkey, Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries agreed to adopt a common Roman alphabet: *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 12, p. 7; no. 16, p. 8.

[62] *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 3, p. 8. The standard written Azerbaijani language is close to Turkish in sounds, vocabulary and grammar, but is by no means identical: see Comrie, *Languages*, pp. 61–5, 74, and Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam*, pp. 38–9.

[63] Altstadt, 'Azerbaijan moves', p. 24. Azerbaijanis soon expressed their new cultural orientation by replacing the standard Russian form of personal names--forename-patronymic-surname, e.g. Afrand Firidunovich Dashdamirov – with the Turkish form – surname-forename-patronymic (shown by *ogly* 'son'): Dashdamirov Afrand Firidun ogly.

[64] *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 2–5, 13, 38–9, 43; 1991, nos. 9, 11–12, 25, 35–6, 50; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 2, p. 11.

[65] Fuller, 'Azerbaijan after the presidential elections', pp. 4–5; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 47, pp. 56–7; Swietochowski, 'Azerbaijan after the coup', pp. 1–2.

[66] *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 25, 31; 1992, no. 1; *Whitaker's Almanack*, 1995, p. 812.

[67] Census 1979, pp. 138, 139, 141, 362; Census 1989, Minneapolis, pt. 2, p. 636.

[68] *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 312.

[69] Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, p. 276; *Pravda*, 1 July 1988, p. 3.

[70] *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 314, 323.

[71] *Pravda*, 21 September 1989.

[72] Rutland, ‘Democracy and nationalism’, pp. 845, 848.

[73] E. Fuller, ‘Armenian First Secretary replaced’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 16, p. 24.

[74] Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, pp. 273, 275–6; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 454; 1989, nos. 1, 14.

[75] Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, pp. 275–6; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 312, 323, 531; 1989, no. 5.

[76] *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 314, 323, 422, 507, 518, 529, 534, 538; 1989, nos. 3–4, 14.

[77] Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, p. 276.

[78] *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 19, 23, 50; 1990, nos. 23, 33.

[79] Ananikian, *Yerevan*, pp. 64–5; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 13, 18.

[80] Rutland, ‘Democracy and nationalism’, p. 851.

[81] E. Fuller, ‘Democratization threatened’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 1, p. 41; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 24.

[82] Dudwick, ‘Armenia’, p. 276; Fuller, ‘Transcaucasus: democratization threatened’, p. 41; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 46. Sometimes the APNM is referred to in English as the ANM or the APM.

[83] E. Fuller, ‘Paramilitary formations in Armenia’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 31, pp. 20–1; ‘Fuller, Democratization threatened’, p. 41; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 16–18, 20, 22–4, 28, 31–3, 35, 37.

[84] *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 28, 36.

[85] *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 23, 31–32.

[86] Fuller, ‘What lies behind’, p. 14; *Pravda*, 30 August 1990, p. 2; 31 August 1990, p. 3; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 33–6; 1991, no. 1; Rutland, ‘Democracy and nationalism’, p. 853.

[87] Fuller, ‘What lies behind’; E. Fuller, ‘The Transcaucasus: real independence remains elusive’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 1, p. 46; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 35.

[88] E. Fuller, ‘Armenia votes overwhelmingly for secession’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 39, pp. 18–21; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 40; Rutland, ‘Democracy and nationalism’, p. 854.

[89] A. Sheehy, ‘Armenia invokes Law on the Mechanics of Secession’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 11, p. 21.

[90] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 243.

[91] Adams, ‘Millions at risk’; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 38–9; 1990, no. 17; 1991, no. 2; 1992, nos. 12, 14, 16, 47, 50; 1993, nos. 1, 5, 7, 9.

[92] *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 13, 15–16, 19–21, 23, 29, 32–3, 36, 38, 40, 50; 1993, nos. 3, 7, 10.

[93] *The Economist*, 21 September 1996, pp. 50–1; A. Higgins, ‘Where true democracy is the first casualty’, *Independent*, 12 June 1995, p. 12; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 24–6, 29, 34–5; 1993, nos. 7–10.

[94] R. Beeston, ‘Election win threatens stability in Caucasus’, *The Times*, 1 April 1998; *The Economist*, 21 September 1996, p. 51; 1 November 1997, pp. 44–5; 7 September 1998, pp. 48–9; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 22; 1993, nos. 1, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22.

19 Georgia, 1987–1993

Georgia and reform

The 1992 Georgian crisis and the stalemate in Highland Karabagh helped the Russian military to regain their position in the state and their influence on Yeltsin, and the Georgian--Abkhazian war demonstrated that Russian conduct was dictated entirely by strategic considerations: in the first place, control over the Rostov-Krasnodar-Tuapse-Tbilisi railway (the direct Moscow--Tbilisi line). Humanitarian concern for starving Armenia was invoked as a motive, but in fact what mattered to Moscow was its continuing grip on 'Transcaucasia' and its Turkish and Iranian frontiers. Shevardnadze might wish for regional agreement between states bordering on the Black Sea, including Turkey, but Russia's generals cared only for their military bases in the South Caucasian republics, both to control the latter and to guard what they continued to consider as *Russia's* Middle East frontier. On the Caspian, oil was of paramount importance, and from 1991 Azerbaijan's pursuit of foreign investments and quest for oil outlets avoiding Rossiyan Federation territory evoked protests from Moscow.[1] In its strategic calculations Moscow wanted to command the approaches to South Caucasia by way of Abkhazia, Osetia and Daghestan, through which the few land routes passed.

Eduard Shevardnadze, who was First Secretary of the Georgian KP in 1972–85, claimed that Georgia began independent local reforms of the Soviet administrative system before Moscow, that 'restructuring' really began in

Georgia and that, by encouraging private initiative in agriculture and transport, 'We undermined stagnation from within.'[2] However, another view of these economic experiments might be that, without any need for official encouragement, it was simply the Georgians' tradition of competitive ostentation within a network of personal obligations that produced a flourishing 'second economy' surpassing even that of the Central Asian republics.[3] After 1985, when Shevardnadze was called to Moscow to become USSR foreign minister, and Georgia's leadership reverted to men of lower calibre, the economy (both official and underground) and corrupt bureaucracy continued to flourish. There was little sign of Gorbachov's 'new thinking', except that the most potent artistic condemnation of the communist régime, the Georgian film *Repentance*[4] (made in 1984 and immediately banned) was released for public showing through Shevardnadze's intercession in 1987. Made by Tengiz Abuladze in a satirical, partly fantastic manner, with a generalized dictator-figure suggesting a combination of Hitler, Stalin and Beria, this remarkable film carried specific associations for all Soviet citizens, but especially for Georgians and other Caucasian peoples, who had suffered no less than the Russians during the KPSS Terror.[5]

As in other republics of the Soviet Union, from 1988 onwards Georgian intellectuals took up Gorbachov's declaration of 'openness' in the press and public discussion, especially with regard to aspects of twentieth-century history that had been suppressed by official communist history – and Abuladze's *Repentance* was a fitting prologue to this process. Key issues which were now reopened included the independent Georgian democracy founded in 1918 with Noe Zhordania as its prime minister, the treaty with Lenin's Russia which was violated by the suppression and military occupation of democratic Georgia in 1921; and its abortive uprising against the Bolsheviks in 1924. Later events revived in the Georgian media included Stalin's reign of terror in the 1930s--40s; the deportation of Meskhetis and others in the 1940s; and the ‘Megrelian affair’ of the 1950s. In addition, perennial themes were taken up again fervently, in particular the defence of the Georgian language and rejection of Russification.[6] According to one language specialist,

> Any visitor to Georgia is immediately struck by the centrality of the Georgian language, both in everyday functions and in cultural contexts…Oral communcation plays a more ritualised role in the functioning of society than in contemporary English-speaking countries. Georgians…expect to initiate and receive large numbers of social telephone calls, maintaining contact on a daily basis with a wide network of relatives, friends and acquaintances. Academics and business visitors from abroad find that they are expected to make an ever-increasing number of social visits, simply for the purpose of phatic communication…to such an extent that the time-pressed Westerner despairs of ever getting down to work…Georgian newspapers not infrequently carry articles with a bearing on language…particularly between 1989 and 1993 one encountered articles on a huge range of language-related subjects…Indeed, the *State Programme for the Georgian Language (1989*) included among its numerous measures to promote the use of Georgian the publication of newspaper articles on the history of the Georgian language, its function in contemporary life and the defence of the purity of the written language…Georgia could thus be characterised as a highly language-conscious society.[7]

Georgia's ethnic multiplicity and nationalism

Although not involved in the Azerbaijani--Armenian war over Karabagh, Georgia itself was a 'small empire',[8] with internal antagonisms going back far beyond 1917. Apart from its essentially Georgian regions – Kartli-Kakheti in the east, and Meskheti, Guria, Megrelia and Svaneti in western Georgia – the Georgian SSR embraced three designated ethnic territories: the ASSR of the Achar (Muslim) Georgians, the ASSR of the Abkhaz people, and the AP of those Osetians who live south of the Great Caucasus range (see Map 28). In addition it had minorities of Azerbaijanis (5.7% of the republic's population) living mainly in districts south of Tbilisi on the Armenian border, and Armenians (8.1%) in Tbilisi and other towns, as well as smaller numbers of Avars, Kurds, Assyrians, Greeks and others. There was also the exiled Muslim community of Meskhis ('Meskhetian Turks') who, despite deportation to Central Asia in 1944, still thought of Georgia's Samtskhe-Javakheti region as their homeland and wanted to return there, but were excluded by the Georgian government unless they renounced their 'Turkish' identity, which had been reinforced by their exile in Central Asia.[9] Moreover, as events were to prove, despite 170 years of Russian rule, the old distinction between eastern ('Persian') and western ('Turkish') Georgia (essentially between Kartvelians and Megrelians) was far from defunct.[10] Russians resident in Georgia numbered about 341,000[11] (6.3% of its total population) including retired soldiers and government officials, many personnel of the Transcaucasian Military District, and long-established communities of exiled Dukhobors.

Thus many potential causes of ethnic unrest existed within the Georgian Republic and, since many Georgians were intensely nationalistic,[12] with a tendency not only to oppose assimilation by the Russians, but also to impose Georgian culture on their neighbours, the secessionist trends stimulated by Gorbachov's reforms caused much disquiet. This was understandable in terms of national self-preservation: after centuries of depredations by their Turkish and Iranian neighbours, Georgians felt it essential to maintain the greatest possible potential in territory and population. (If the two non-Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Osetia were to secede, the Georgian republic would lose 18% of its area, while the less probable defection of Acḥaria could result in a total loss of over one-fifth of what Georgians looked upon as their territory.) Communist officials boasted of Georgia's care for its ethnic minorities, with schools teaching in eight languages and media programmes in seven[13] but, because the Georgians feared that Muslims with their higher birth rate could soon outnumber them in their own republic, some of their first demonstrations, in October 1988, demanded that the Azerbaijani minority's schools be closed.[14] In fact the proportion of Azerbaijanis in Georgia since 1926 had increased no more than that of the Georgians themselves,[15] but this did not deter some Georgians from loose talk about subjecting ethnic minorities to compulsory birth control.[16] Other inter-ethnic undercurrents emerged in Batumi, the capital of Acḥaria, with demonstrations by Orthodox Christians for the return of a church to religious use, and by Muslims demanding repatriation of Acḥars exiled by Beria. Moreover, the religious tolerance existing since 1985 was understood by Georgians as freedom for the Orthodox Church, while discrimination against Islam continued, especially in Acḥaria, where Gamsakhurdia's supporters indulged in ‘aggressively pro-Christian proselytizing’, and some Georgian nationalists adopted the slogan: ‘Long live independent *Christian* Georgia!'[17] Tension was also increased by the publication in December 1988 of a 'state programme for the Georgian language', which for all other nationalities in the republic probably meant Georgianization.[18]

After the savagery of Soviet Russia's organs of repression in their assault on Georgian demonstrators in April 1989 there was a surge of political activity in the republic, with many new parties being formed and new politicians emerging. This led to a very confused period of kaleidoscopic shifting and feuding between leaders, parties and eventually whole regions of Georgia, which continued into 1990 and beyond.[19] For many Georgians patriotic sentiments were closely tied to the Georgian Orthodox Church, and in particular the great scholar, writer and social reformer Ilia Cḥavcḥavadze, who was murdered in 1907 by persons unknown.[20] Cḥavcḥavadze, who was canonized in 1987, inspired several contemporary groups and parties standing for 'Fatherland, Language and Faith', including the 'Ilia Cḥavcḥavadze Society for Political Development and Education of the Georgian people' (1988), the rival 'Ilia Cḥavcḥavadze Society: Fourth Group', founded by Gamsakhurdia, Giorgi Cḥanturia, Merab Kostava and Irakli Tṣereteli, and the 'Society of Ilia the Righteous' (1990). There was also the KPSS-inspired 'Rustaveli Society', with as many as 30,000 'politically minded, moderate' members of the intelligentsia – greatly outnumbering any other unofficial organization. Along with a Georgian Popular Front, a national Independence Party, a National Democratic Party, a Green party and many others, they totalled at least thirty-three parties and groups. In contrast with this proliferation of political parties, they mainly had very few members (reflecting the Georgians' 'unwillingness to join parties') and this leads the author of the study to the conclusion that

> the inability to establish properly constituted, mass political organizations reflected not only the lack of social cohesion in Georgian society and the absence of an institutional base, but also the fact that political labels, such as Conservative, Liberal, Social-Democratic, [etc.] were irrelevant to Georgian public opinion until the question of independence had been addressed. In these circumstances Georgian politics became increasingly dominated by personalities, specifically Gamsakhurdia…[who] in addition to his undoubted personal charisma and dissident past… appeared to be one of the few political figures who was pursuing a consistent line.

In March 1989 Georgians demonstrated in Sukhumi against the Abkhazians' renewed request to Moscow that, because of cultural oppression and the inundation of their country by Georgian settlers, Abkhazia should become an SSR directly subordinated to the USSR government. Similar demonstrations occurred in Tbilisi, and violent clashes in Abkhazia during July.[21] To justify their position, Georgians used the same arguments as the Russians: since Abkhazia was, like the whole USSR, 'multi-ethnic', the Georgians who now formed the majority of its inhabitants had no less right to live there than the Abkhaz themselves. Thus Georgian nationalists demanding independence for Georgia paradoxically echoed Russian imperialists by asserting that Georgia was 'indivisible' and by applying Gorbachov's facile pejoratives 'separatist', 'extremist' and 'selfish aims and ambitions' to any minority which sought to 'violate the territorial integrity’ of Georgia by demanding independence.[22]

Georgians had displayed intense patriotism as early as 1978 in demonstrations against the proposed downgrading of the Georgian language in the republic's constitution. The changes made to the USSR Constitution in November 1988, implying greater centralization and Russification, evoked further resentment in Georgia, expressed in mass political rallies. The first notable repercussion of ‘restructuring’ here arose from Gorbachov's overzealous attempt to combat Russia's endemic alcoholism by ordering Georgians to plough up their renowned vineyards. Indignation ran high, and in September there were explicitly anti-Russian demonstrations.[23] Georgia's rejection of the communist past and growing demand for independence made this the first SSR to experience the punitive violence of Moscow's forces of coercion since ‘restructuring’ began – a year before it went into action against Lithuania and Latvia. In spring 1989, after five months of protests against the proposed USSR constitutional amendments, economic problems and Abkhazian demands for secession – to which the Georgian KP leadership offered no response except ‘rabid hostility and political impotence’[24] – mass demonstrations and a hunger strike began in Tbilisi. Gorbachov's reaction to this was also the first demonstration, since his out-of-hand dismissal of Highland Karabagh's desire for unification with Armenia, of his ineptness in dealing with non-Russian communities. Early in the morning of 9 April thousands of Georgians holding a vigil in the city centre were attacked by Soviet army and MVD troops wielding spades and throwing tear-gas canisters, which left twenty dead and thousands wounded or severely affected by gas. In his sympathetic account of this assault, Shevardnadze described a young woman facing an advancing tank as a symbol of ‘the spontaneous protest of a soul yearning for freedom in the face of the pathology of power'.[25] While military commanders denied their responsibility for this crime, it seemed clear that the order to attack was given by the Georgian KP leadership in consultation with Moscow.[26]

The KPSS government refused to condemn the assault, some officials grotesquely pretended that the demonstrators themselves were to blame and, as no one was brought to justice,[27] this event greatly exacerbated an already critical situation. Many Georgian political groups became active, with differing aims which sometimes led to conflicts not with the common enemy – Russian imperialism – but each other, although most of them shared two convictions: fear of the demographic growth of the non-Georgian nationalities, and the need to Georgianize the republic's administration and culture.[28]

Perhaps because of Georgian individualism, the emerging political movements reflected the eccentricities of their leaders in a more personal way than in Armenia or Azerbaijan. The first influential organizations were, on the one hand, the National Democratic Party led by Giorgia Cḥanturia and the Georgian National Independence Party led by Irakli Tṣereteli, which together dominated the National Forum bloc,[29] and on the other hand the Round Table/Free Georgia bloc dominated by Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The latter, because of the standing of his father, a famous novelist, and his own previous activity as a national dissident, enjoyed great popularity, especially in Megrelia, his home region. According to a Georgian specialist,

> [Gamsakhurdia's] actions must be seen in the context of a fanatical commitment to Georgian independence.

His…religious feelings…are…part of a nationalist ideology that views the Georgian church as the embodiment of Georgian statehood…His writings and speeches were infused with a Messianic vision of Georgia's future. His most popular work, *Sakartvelos sulieri missia* (*Georgia's Spiritual Mission*), depicts Georgian Christianity as a militant ideology in defence of the nation…a source of Georgia's 'special spiritual purpose' to mediate between East and West…It is a jumble of mythological theories taken as fact, depicting Georgia as the embodiment of 'ancient spiritual wisdom' and the source of a powerful 'proto-Iberian culture' which spread throughout the ancient world…This pamphlet, typical of the nationalist's mind with its search for past glory and distinctiveness, reveals a dangerously naive and irrational personality. There is not a trace of skepticism in the work. Georgia is a superior culture. The consequence of this deeply held ethnocentrism was a policy aimed at the limitation of the smaller and inferior cultures which shared Georgia's historical territory. Gamsakhurdia's other characteristics were…paranoia, a conspiratorial frame of mind, virulent anti-communism, and a tendency to self-glorification…Colleagues who broke with Gamsakhurdia became traitors, and critical intellectuals became Moscow's tools…Gamsakhurdia viewed himself as the last in a long line of Georgian national heroes, all of whom, in his words, have embodied 'sacrifices on the altar of the fatherland'. The struggle for Gamsakhurdia was between 'good' and evil'.[30]

A mass of active (and armed) supporters – like himself, not noted for sophisticated political thinking[31] – readily followed his campaign for Georgian independence and his naive belief in Georgia's ‘destiny’ as ‘an example of moral greatness for the whole world’.[32] Gamsakhurdia's dictatorial attitude and paranoia brought enormous turbulence and violence to Georgia – especially to the Abkhazians and Osetians, who were not deemed to be special peoples.[33] By the end of 1990, in the absence of any recognized central authority capable of creating a unified Georgian army, the 20,000 troops of the republic's MVD were supplemented by several paramilitary groups – irregulars maintained in defiance of Gorbachov's order to disarm. Gamsakhurdia created a 12,000-strong ‘National Guard’ commanded by Tengiz Kitovani. His ‘democratic’ opponents also created a paramilitary force – ‘Georgia's Knights’ (sakartvelos mkhedrioni) led by Jaba Ioseliani, which numbered over 5,000 men. These private armies confronted each other in the streets of Tbilisi, and among their politically motivated crimes was an attempt to assassinate Chanturia.[34]

In the aftermath of the April 1989 massacre no May Day parades were held in Georgia, but on 26 May big demonstrations commemorated the founding of the independent Georgian Republic in 1918. Further demonstrations, especially against the conscription of young Georgians to the Soviet army, continued into 1990, culminating in the demolition of Lenin statues in five cities.[35] As the anniversary of the 1989 massacre approached, there were ominous signs of a developing political power struggle, in which, according to the moderate intellectual Mamardashvili, ‘some of the leaders of the new movements are again behaving like commissars…once again we are playthings in the hands of a new totalitarianism despotism'.[36]

Gamsakhurdia and chaos

Distrusting the existing communist-dominated Georgian government, most political groups wanted the 1990 Soviet elections to be boycotted, and some organized independent elections to an oppositional National Congress. In response to this pressure and a Gamsakhurdist blockade of the Moscow railway at Samtredia junction in western Georgia, the Georgian Supreme Soviet agreed to hold multi-party elections in October--November. These resulted in a big victory for Gamsakhurdia, whose Round Table coalition gained 155 of the 250 seats, while the KP took 64, and the Democratic bloc, which was considered his chief rival, gained only 4. Gamsakhurdia was elected chairman of the Soviet, which dropped 'Soviet Socialist' from the republic's title, restored the flag and national anthem of the independent Georgia (1918–22), resolved to protect human rights and establish law and order, and decreed that Georgian conscripts must not serve outside Georgia.[37]

Despite these seemingly liberal measures, despotism quickly emerged as the hallmark of Gamsakhurdia's régime, especially in relation to the non-Georgian nationalities. He denied opposition groups access to the media, imposed severe censorship,[38] replaced local councils with prefects responsible only to himself, and quickly deployed his 'National Guard' against the National Congress's 'Knights' and their leader Ioseliani.[39] Gamsakhurdia's pursuit of glory for Georgia and himself continued on 9 April 1991, when independence was proclaimed. His election as president by the Supreme Soviet was confirmed in May, when more than

72% of the electorate chose him in preference to six other candidates, some of whom were knocked out of the contest by dubious means. Thus a potential fascist despot was installed in Georgia, apparently by legal election and popular consent, despite his manifest contempt for democratic rule. His hatred of non-Georgian minorities was unambiguous: in July he drafted a citizenship law which would have excluded all except those whose ancestors had lived in Georgia before 1801. This, however, was rejected, and the final version accepted all who had lived there for the previous ten years, knew the Georgian language and recognized the republic's constitution.[40]

Unsurprisingly, a constant refrain in Gamsakhurdia's political tirades was extreme hatred of everything Russian and communist. Nevertheless, in August 1991, so far from immediately condemning the Moscow coup, he equivocated, and indeed ordered the subordination of his ‘National Guard’ to the Georgian MVD as required by the conspirators.[41] This led to a mutiny and Kitovani's withdrawal of the Guard from Tbilisi. September brought widespread protests against Gamsakhurdia, to which he responded by ordering his troops to shoot at demonstrators. A state of emergency was declared, crowds of Megrelian supporters were summoned to Tbilisi, ostensibly to protect Gamsakhurdia's government, and in November, having terminated any semblance of democracy and assumed personal command over the secret police, Gamsakhurdia became dictator of Georgia.[42] Increasing violence heralded two weeks of street-fighting in December between Gamsakhurdia's troops and the National Guard, and he was besieged in Tbilisi's Supreme Soviet building – until he was reduced to requesting support from the Moscow he professed to loathe. Gamsakhurdia's brief tyranny ended on

6 January 1992,[43] when he fled to Armenia and thence to western Georgia, where he bombastically proclaimed the formation of a Megrelian--Abkhazian republic. From his headquarters at Zugdidi, on 16 January he declared war on Tbilisi and set out at the head of some 5,000 men. A chaotic series of advances and retreats ensued, with Gamsakhurdia's forces marauding in western Georgia, blowing up bridges and abducting officials, while his supporters in Tbilisi staged an abortive coup in June. Thereafter Gamsakhurdia fled to Chechenia, while his supporters' futile campaigning dragged on until his suicide in January 1994.[44]

Meanwhile opposition parties in Tbilisi formed a Military Council to take control until the civil war ended. On its invitation Shevardnadze arrived in Georgia in March 1992, and was appointed head of a provisional State Council. Elections in October resulted in a parliament in which more than thirty parties were represented, and Shevardnadze was chosen as its chairman with a clear mandate (59% of the electorate). However, Georgia's internal division and lawlessness persisted, and although Kitovani's National Guard and Ioseliani's Knights were nominally subordinated to the Military Council, their rivalry continued. The paramilitaries disregarded Shevardnadze's decrees ordering them to disband, and he found himself at the head of a powerless government 'whose writ barely extended beyond Tbilisi' and which, up to 1994, was unable to form a centralized national army.[45]

Georgia badly needed a respite after four years of turbulence, during which its economy had been disastrously neglected, as well as being affected by the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Within the USSR's 'Transcaucasian' economic region Georgia's principal contribution to heavy industry had been the mining of non-ferrous metals and coal near Kutaisi in western Georgia, and the iron foundry at Rustavi near Tbilisi, which smelted iron ore from Azerbaijan. By late 1988, however, the Rustavi iron works was bankrupt, and thereafter the Karabagh conflict affected power supplies, since Georgia relied on gas and oil pipelines from Azerbaijan, which were frequently interrupted, and electricity from Armenia's Metṣamor nuclear power plant, which was closed in 1991. In western Georgia severe atmospheric pollution from the Zestafoni iron smelter had evoked protests since the 1970s, but its importance to Moscow's Stateplan precluded its closure. Moreover, Georgia, like Armenia, had suffered natural disasters which further depleted national resources. In 1987 big avalanches in the Svanetian mountains had necessitated the evacuation of thousands of Svans to lower-lying districts, and in 1991 earthquakes severely damaged a large area east of Tbilisi, including South Osetia. Thus the Georgian economy was in considerable difficulties before the chaotic Gamsakhurdia episode began; thereafter, it could be described as ‘an unmitigated disaster’.[46]

After Gamsakhurdia's departure, Shevardnadze, as an able statesman with a reputation for integrity, should have been free to devote himself to restoring the shattered economy, the development of democratic institutions and the search for a diplomatic compromise in relations with Russia – if the Georgians had not become entangled in a web of conflicts with their nearest neighbours.

South Osetia

The wars stirred up by Gamsakhurdia – described by one Georgian writer as a ‘natural result of the lack of political culture and democratic institutions'[47] – greatly exacerbated ethnic problems, involving not only the non-Georgian peoples in the republic, in particular the Osetians and Abkhazians, but through them also the peoples of North Caucasus: Circassians, Balkars, Karachays, North Osetians, Chechens and others, including Russian Cossacks.

The first people to experience Gamsakhurdia's ethnic aggression were the Osetians, some 65,000 of whom lived in the South Osetian Autonomous Province of Georgia around Tskhinvali (forming more than 66% of its population). In addition, 66,300 lived in central Georgia, between Gori and Tbilisi, and in scattered pockets farther east.[48] In the 'autonomous' province the Osetian People's Word (Ademon Nykhas) party demanded real autonomy, greater economic and social development, recognition of Osetian as an official language of the province, upgrading to ASSR status and – most provocatively – unification with North Osetia, which belonged to the Russian Republic. Understandably, these demands, pressed by many demonstrations and political meetings from September 1989,[49] and no doubt backed by North Osetia, were dismissed by the Georgian government as 'absurd territorial claims' threatening 'destabilization' (in fact, their result would have been an impossible situation for Georgia, with a gaping hole left by tearing out the whole territory of South Osetia, an integral part of Georgia). The situation was not improved when gangs of young Georgian men travelled to Tskhinvali in November and staged anti-Osetian demonstrations, leading to violent confrontation and intervention by MVD troops, and in January 1990, after random killings by gunmen on both sides, Moscow again decided to 'restore order' in South Osetia by sending in MVD troops.[50] Demonstrations continued on both sides until August, when the Tbilisi Supreme Soviet heightened tension by passing a law banning from the forthcoming multi-party elections any organization based exclusively on one ethnic region, such as the Osetian People's Word. Defiantly, the Osetians in Tskhinvali on 20 September 1990 proclaimed the sovereignty of the ‘South Osetian Democratic Socialist Republic’ – which, after predictable rejection by both Tbilisi and Moscow, was followed by two years of civil war.[51]

Gamsakhurdia's accession to power in November 1990 brought declarations of his new Georgian government's own chauvinist views. Its supporters called Osetians ‘criminals’, ‘ignorant, wild people’ who ‘breed like rabbits’ and were ‘swamping the Georgians’.[52] Osetians, like Azerbaijanis, were declared to have no inalienable right to reside in Georgia, because of their ostensibly recent immigration – which Georgian nationalists now put as late as the nineteenth century – and Gamsakhurdia demanded their wholesale expulsion to North Osetia. To enforce this, on 11 December his government abolished the South Osetian Autonomous Province and declared a state of emergency there. The Osetians’ appeal to Gorbachov resulted in a ruling that Gamsakhurdia's action was unconstitutional, and a decree in January 1991 ordering Georgian police and KGB to leave South Osetia. Gamsakhurdia rejected this, as this was Georgian territory, and in self-justification he pointed to Moscow's current military intervention in Lithuania.[53] Meanwhile Gorbachov, in consistency with his policy of prohibiting alterations to existing territorial borders as a potential cause of ethnic conflicts, again rejected the South Osetians’ declaration of sovereignty – which left them at the mercy of Georgian nationalist militants. Georgia responded by abolishing ‘South Osetia’ and offering its citizens ‘cultural autonomy’ without self-government, and in April Tskhinvali and Znauri districts were annexed to central Georgia.[54]

Meanwhile the ‘South Osetians’ set up barricades and exchanged gunfire with Georgian troops, while Georgian nationalist paramilitaries blockaded roads to prevent supplies reaching Tskhinvali and Java. Many South Osetian refugees fled northward, taking the hazardous winter pass over the mountains into North Osetia, where by the end of April 1991 about 25,000 had found refuge. Moreover, events in South Osetia evoked support from people in the much larger North Osetian ASSR, in the form not only of food supplies to their southern compatriots, but also of volunteers joining the fight against the Georgians.[55]

As intensive warfare developed in January 1991, troops of the USSR MVD and Army garrison were sent in at the request of the ‘South Osetian government’, to try to separate the two sides. Gamsakhurdia refused to obey Gorbachov's order to withdraw his Georgian troops, which were not protecting the Osetians from Georgian paramilitaries operating in and around Tskhinvali. On the contrary, according to Gamsakhurdia, immediately on arrival the USSR MVD troops started assisting the ‘separatists’. Ceasefires were made and broken, the Osetian self-defence force raided police stations for weapons, and Georgian ethnic terrorism spread, with random shooting, looting and burning of houses, so that by mid-April more than fifty Osetian villages had been destroyed and cleared of their inhabitants, adding to the flood of refugees seeking shelter in Tskhinvali or North Osetia. Thus, while the ‘Round Table’ government proclaimed Georgia's independence and complained about Russian oppression, they were themselves actively oppressing the ‘South Osetians’. A road blockade prevented provisions from reaching Osetian-held districts, and further hardship was imposed by Georgia's disruption of electricity supplies to South Osetia in February. As the USSR

MVD's task was to disarm and disband nationalist guerrillas, their troops frequently exchanged fire with Georgian gunmen, and sometimes also with Osetians, but it was not until April that Russian troops broke Georgia's blockade, allowing provisions to be brought to Tskhinvali's hungry population.[56]

Although heavy fighting and bombardment of Tskhinvali continued during March and April, Tbilisi pretended that a ceasefire was in force and dismissed such reports as slander invented by North Osetia. Another line insisted on by Gamsakhurdia was that it was not Georgian but Russian troops that were wreaking havoc in South Osetia, in order to destabilize Georgia and undermine its independence (which was quite conceivable). He then fomented a strike affecting transport and factories controlled by Moscow, causing some factions in the USSR Supreme Soviet to demand the imposition of direct presidential rule in South Osetia as the only way of stopping the bloodshed.[57] Meanwhile Gamsakhurdia declared that the conflict had been provoked by the Georgian Osetians themselves, and recommended that, as South Osetia no longer existed, North Osetia should rename itself simply ‘Osetia’.[58]

Further devastation was caused in the region in April--June 1991 by earthquakes, which destroyed much of Tskhinvali and Java. At the same time, all of Tskhinvali's Georgian inhabitants were driven out, leaving the town in the hands of the Osetians, whom Gamsakhurdia dismissed as ‘bandits’.[59] It was after the August 1991 Moscow coup attempt that the Rossiyan Federation, as successor to the USSR, accused Gamsakhurdia's Georgia of violating human rights, and threatened to impose economic sanctions if it did not bring the conflict to an end, while Russian women in South Osetia appealed to the UN and Western states against Georgia's ‘genocidal’ policy. By November 1991 ‘Tskhinvali was practically empty of Georgians, and most neighbouring villages [were] burnt out and abandoned.’ Nevertheless, Georgia renewed its assault on Tskhinvali, with more than 17,000 troops, armoured cars and tanks surrounding the town to blockade food supplies and medical aid, while the Rossiyan MVD reaffirmed its intention of keeping its troops there to curb the violence, and Moscow refused to sign an economic treaty with Georgia until the situation was ‘stabilized’.[60]

While disorder among the Georgians themselves reached a pitch in December 1991, with fighting between Gamsakhurdia's followers and Kitovani's National Guard, the ‘South Osetian government’ ordered the mobilization of all men and women for the defence of their homeland. However, the Georgian government's final assault on Tskhinvali never took place, because of its internal war against Gamsakhurdia and his overthrow in January 1992. Meanwhile, ‘South Osetians’ confirmed their declaration of independence by a referendum. However much enthusiasm this may have generated among North Osetia's population, its leaders, as loyal subjects of Rossiya, but with considerations of local ethnic relations at heart, remained lukewarm, and avoided complicating relations with Georgia.[61]

Shevardnadze's arrival in Tbilisi in March 1992 brought little solace to the ‘South Osetians’, since the possibility of Russia taking them under its wing had disappeared with the collapse of the USSR. Shevardnadze quickly arranged the withdrawal of most Russian troops from Georgian territory, which included South Osetia. Peace moves were now initiated by Georgian moderates, and in May the South Osetian leader Torez Kulumbegov had talks with Shevardnadze. More portentous was a meeting in June between Shevardnadze and Yeltsin near Sochi, at which they agreed to arrange a ceasefire and a ‘peace-keeping’ force composed of Rossiyan, Georgian and Osetian troops. As this arrangement between Russia and Georgia implied the latter's continuing sovereignty in ‘South Osetia’, and ignored the proposed union of North and South Osetia, some Tskhinvali Osetians protested that they had been sold to Georgia.[62] At least this brought an end to what Shevardnadze called a ‘senseless and pointless’ war and allowed refugees to return to what remained of their homes. The truce reassured the Georgians that the security and integrity of their country was (for the time being) safe from the direct intrusion of Russian influence, intrigue and armed force, but left the political status of the territory of Georgia's Osetians still undefined.[63] As a Georgian observed, a final peaceful solution to suit both sides was difficult to achieve, ‘as popular sentiment in Georgia opposes the restoration of autonomy in the area, especially under the name of “South Osetia”, as that would imply once again the “unification of the two Osetias”. On the other side, the de facto government in Tskhinvali still insisted on merging with Northern Osetia, which would imply the annexation of a large part of Georgia by Russia.’[64] This complicated question of territories and borders, arising from the Russian KP's unconventional (but perhaps never unpremeditated) practice was indeed fraught with problems for Georgia's future.

Abkhazia

In August 1990, despite Georgia's new election law banning any political party which proposed the ‘violation of Georgia's integrity’[65] – i.e. sought greater ethnic autonomy or secession – the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet declared state sovereignty, and in October most non-Georgian citizens either boycotted the Georgian Republic elections altogether, or voted for the communists. As Georgian voters on the whole boycotted parties which favoured non-Georgian citizens, endemic nationalism favoured Gamsakhurdia's government, in which non-Georgian communities had practically no voice. This spirit of national exclusiveness was enshrined in a new Georgian constitution, in which only ten brief references to Abkhazia and Acharia occurred, aimed not at stating their rights but at restricting them.[66]

A crude demonstration of Abkhazian disaffection came in November 1990, when vehicles carrying the Georgian Orthodox patriarch and his suite on a visitation were attacked.[67] Abkhazians demonstrated their repudiation of Georgian domination again in March 1991 by defying Georgia's boycott of the USSR referendum on the preservation of the union, and voting by a large majority to retain it.[68] The Abkhazian government took matters further in January 1992 by raising the possibility of secession from Georgia as an independent state.[69] However, the Georgians based their claim to Abkhazia in the first place on current population figures, which in 1989 had shown that Georgians formed a plurality in the Abkhazian ASSR (45.7%), while the Abkhaz were only 17.8% – 93,267 out of the republic's 525,061 inhabitants; there were almost as many Armenians (14.6%) and Russians (14.3%). The Abkhaz, however, could not but view their current ‘minority’ position from the perspective of 200 years of war and occupation of their land by the Russians, its severe depopulation by mass expulsion to Turkey, their short-lived autonomy in 1921 followed by subjection to the Georgian Republic, and the subsequent mass immigration from Russia and Georgia of outsiders exploiting Abkhazia's favourable environment for agriculture, tourism, health resorts, holiday cottages (for privileged people in other union republics) or permanent settlement.[70]

Notwithstanding the apparent advantages enjoyed by the Abkhazians, many of them perceived discrimination by the Tbilisi government and Georgians resident in Abkhazia and believed that their autonomy was a sham because, ‘whilst Abkhazians may have held figurehead positions in government, all crucial decisions were taken in Tbilisi by, and to the advantage of, Kartvelians’.[71] In addition to the statistical argument against Abkhazian secession, in 1989 Georgian journalists and politicians had revived P. Ingoroqva's spurious idea, refuted long ago even in Georgia, that Abkhazia had belonged to Georgia from the earliest times, and that the Abkhaz were not its original inhabitants, but incomers who had come from north of the mountains perhaps 200 years before, and ‘never had their own statehood’. Although it is known that the Abkhazians’ relatives the Abazas moved away *north* of the mountains into Circassia more than 300 years ago, the opposite opinion was adopted at the highest level, not only by Gamsakhurdia (who asserted that Abkhazia really belonged to the Megrelians) but also by Shevardnadze's government.[72] The Georgians’ arrogant tone in asserting their right to Abkhazia in itself predisposes towards the conclusion that ‘The historical justification for the Abkhazians’ claim to their territory is… beyond dispute.’[73]

The onset of Gorbachov's reforms had emboldened the Abkhaz to press their cause once more, and in June 1988 sixty Abkhazian intellectuals sent a letter to Gorbachov, outlining the history of their people and making the reasonable request that Abkhazia's December 1921 status be restored as a union republic subordinated to Moscow, but having special links with Georgia through a bilateral treaty.[74] This coincided with the emergence of strongly supported Abkhazian political organizations demanding self-determination – Aydgylara (Unity) and the Abkhazian People's Front. The culmination of this popular movement was a big gathering at Lykhny in March 1989 at which a declaration reiterating the request for SSR status separate from Georgia was signed by 37,000 people, including 5,000 Armenian, Russian, Greek and even Georgian inhabitants of Abkhazia. This petition – which, as usual, remained unacknowledged by Moscow – stimulated Georgia's own nationalist demonstrations for secession from the USSR, in a protest campaign officially backed by Georgia's government. In April, as hunger-strikers for Georgian independence were being assaulted by Soviet troops in Tbilisi, other Georgians were on hunger strike in Sukhumi, demanding the affiliation of the Abkhazian university's Georgian section to Tbilisi university. As a result, in July there were clashes in Sukhumi and Ochamchira, which left 18 dead and 450 wounded. After several days of violence in Abkhazia the Moscow government declared a state of emergency, evacuated holiday-makers and imposed a curfew which remained in force for several months. Meanwhile, near the Abkhazian border at Zugdidi an MVD building was raided and weapons stolen by Megrelian paramilitaries.[75]

On 25 August 1990, as many Soviet republics, including Georgia, declared sovereignty, it was only Georgia's adoption of a discriminatory election law that provoked the non-Georgian half of the Sukhumi Supreme Soviet to vote for restoration of Abkhazia's sovereignty as a separate SSR, whose laws would supersede those of the USSR and the Georgian SSR.[76] Tbilisi immediately annulled this, as did the Georgian half of the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet's deputies meeting on 31 August.[77] While Gamsakhurdia's forces made war on the Tskhinvali Osetians during 1991–2, and Georgia itself declared independence from Rossiya in April 1991, the Abkhazians continued to pursue their orientation towards Russia, voting overwhelmingly for maintenance of the Soviet Union in the March 1991 referendum and complying with the wishes of the Moscow conspirators during the August coup attempt. Finally in July 1992, when the already ousted Gamsakhurdia was directing his breakaway Megrelian forces from a refuge in Chechenia, and Shevardnadze had become head of the Georgian state, the Abkhazian parliament renounced the republic's subjection to Georgia and declared a return to its status under the republic's 1925 constitution. This was a move which Georgia could scarcely condemn, since Georgia itself had declared ‘illegal and invalid’ all state structures created by Moscow since February 1921 – which included the subordination of Abkhazia to Georgia – adopting the self-determined Abkhazian SSR of March 1921 as its lawful predecessor. However, when Abkhazia accordingly proposed the re-establishment of its federal relationship with Georgia by treaty, Shevardnadze's power-hungry defence minister Kitovani launched the Georgian National Guard in an invasion of Abkhazia with the intention of resubjugating it.[78]

Meanwhile the Abkhaz--Georgian conflict had developed a wider North Caucasian dimension. It was the Abkhaz who in August 1989 convened a Congress of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, in which, harking back to the events of 1917–19, they joined with politicians of the Abaza, Adygey, Cherkes, Kabarda, Balkar, Karachay, Chechen and Ingush peoples in setting up a Caucasian Assembly and proposing to combine their territories into a single North Caucasus Federal Republic. While the USSR still existed, the possible benefits of such unification mattered less than the desire of local leaders to assert their separate independence, but during the collapse of the USSR the Third Congress of Mountain Peoples, held in Sukhumi in November 1991, ratified a treaty of confederation and created a Caucasian parliament. This display of potential unity was favoured by neither Georgian nor Russian national governments, since it reflected the ethnic affinity between Abkhazia and the Circassian peoples, and defiance of the imperially established statuses and borders of national territories established and grimly maintained by the KPSS since the 1920s, irrespective of the circumstances and wishes of their populations. As well as voting for the independence of the North Caucasus peoples, including Abkhazia, and expressing support for Jauhar Dudayev's Chechen revolution, the Congress agreed to organize volunteer detachments to assist the Abkhaz and South Osetians against Georgia.[79]

Abkhazia's need for such reinforcements became clear in 1992 as Gamsakhurdia's west Georgian supporters responded to his call for civil war, and fighting between them and Georgians loyal to the Tbilisi Military Council flared up in Abkhazia. Megrelian troops carried out raids on the railway from Russia, kidnapping various Georgian officials. Abkhazian leaders avoided direct involvement in this unedifying Georgian civil war, but took advantage of the turmoil to consolidate their own position. In May they tried, unsuccessfully, to oust the republic's Georgian MVD chief from his post, and in July the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet repudiated the current constitution and declared their reversion to the 1925 constitution of autonomous Abkhazia.[80]

On 14 August 1992 Georgia (now led by Shevardnadze) resumed its war against Abkhazia, the immediate pretext for which was the Abkhazian interior minister's offer to mediate for the release of Georgian security officials who had been abducted by Megrelians. Ḳiṭovani's National Guard crossed the Abkhazian border, ostensibly in search of the hostages, and in Sukhumi were fired on by the Abkhazian National Guard, who viewed this as an invasion. Meanwhile some 1,700 Russian citizens resident in Abkhazia were evacuated by sea under cover of Rossiyan paratroops. The Tbilisi government made the clearly unacceptable offer of Abkhazia's ‘self-determination’ *within Georgia*, while Ḳiṭovani set an ultimatum for the resignation of Abkhazia's prime minister, Vladislav Ardzinba, and on its expiry Georgian troops drove into Sukhumi and stormed the Abkhazian parliament building, killing five people.[81] The extreme nationalistic spirit in which some Georgians saw their mission was expressed in another ultimatum threatening the annihilation of the whole Abkhazian people if their forces did not surrender and Ardzinba did not resign.[82] The Abkhazian government, refusing to negotiate until Georgian troops were withdrawn, escaped to Gudauta, where they were besieged. Meanwhile an ultimatum to Georgia from the Confederation of Mountain Peoples expired, and its members sent volunteer contingents to Abkhazia ‘to resist the Georgian aggressors’. Shevardnadze demanded the withdrawal of these volunteers before any negotiations with Abkhazia, and Yeltsin assumed the right to condemn the involvement of North Caucasians – whom he considered to be subjects of Russia – and threatened Rossiyan intervention to halt the fighting, which continued with many ultimatums and ceasefires, and mounting casualties, until an Abkhazian offensive in September 1993 took Sukhumi and the war ended.[83]

Georgia's Acḥarian and other Muslims

Not only the Abkhaz and South Osetians were victimized by the Georgians, but also even some smaller minorities. (Significantly, Georgia's largest non-Georgian community, the Armenians, did not suffer much discrimination, because of their very long symbiosis with the Georgians and despite the theological division between their Christian churches.) The intensity of the Georgians’ religious prejudice was demonstrated not only by their continuing refusal to allow the exiled Georgian Muslims of Meskheti to return to their homeland, but also in their vindictive attitude towards the Georgian Muslim population of the Acḥarian ASSR. In 1990 Gamsakhurdia's government foolishly attempted mass conversion to Orthodox Christianity in Acḥaria and the neighbouring Akhaltsikhe district of Meskheti, where it provocatively appointed an Orthodox priest as government prefect. In Acḥaria some former mosques were turned into churches, and when this provoked protest Gamsakhurdia – even before his similar move against South Osetia – proposed the abolition of Acḥaria's autonomy. The official opening of the border crossing to Turkey south of Batumi in 1988 had given some comfort to the Acḥarians, but the paranoic Gamsakhurdia was quick to conclude that their new self-assertiveness (long suppressed by Russian communism) indicated ‘pan-Turkish, pan-Islamic sentiments’.[84]

Angered by Gamsakhurdia's attempts to undermine their autonomy, in January 1991 the Acḥarian Supreme Soviet drafted an election law which would have limited candidature to permanent residents of Acḥaria, but this was rejected by Gamsakhurdia. To enforce his will, he then appointed district ‘prefects’ throughout Acḥaria, who obligingly declared that the population did not want to belong to the Acḥarian ASSR. A new MVD head was appointed in Batumi, and the chairman of the Acḥarian Supreme Soviet, Ṭengiz Khakhva, was forced to resign. In March officials from Tbilisi, with an armed escort, presided over a meeting of the Supreme Soviet which duly installed the Acḥar Aslan Abashidze as its chairman and Nodar Imnadze, of Gamsakhurdia's Round Table, as his deputy. Further postponement of elections pending a referendum on the abolition of Acḥaria's autonomy provoked protests in April, during which demonstrators forced their way into Government House with the aim of ousting the imposed leadership. Characteristically, Gamsakhurdia's party blamed this ‘attempted coup’ on ‘former KPSS officials, the military and people with pan-Islamist sympathies’. The culmination of this gangsterism came at 2 a.m. on 30 April when Acting Deputy Chairman Imnadze was shot dead in the Supreme Soviet building while attempting to assassinate Chairman Abashidze. The elections which followed in June were a fiasco, with very low polls in rural districts, but the Round Table claimed a victory. In any case, the Acḥar Supreme Soviet's autonomy was practically abolished by Gamsakhurdia's decree empowering him to annul any law enacted by the Supreme Soviets of Acḥaria or Abkhazia that conflicted with the Georgian constitution. Acḥaria was not involved in Gamsakhurdia's west Georgian war, and after March 1992 Shevardnadze's more diplomatic approach, recognizing that Acḥarian Muslims could be loyal Georgians, allowed the conflict to subside.[85]

The case of the 4,000 Avars who lived at the other end of Georgia in the mountains near Kvareli provided further evidence of Gamsakhurdia's striving for complete Georgianization. Daghestanis (Avars and Ginukhs) had already been expelled from Georgia in 1944 and the late 1960s, but the first hint in the Georgian press of further ‘ethnic cleansing’ was, typically, a denial in 1991 that

Daghestanis were being expelled – soon belied by an announcement that Georgia and Daghestan had signed a treaty for the ‘exchange’ of the Avars in Georgia for Georgians living in Daghestan. In fact this was the legitimation of a deportation programme already begun: since 1989 Georgian bullies, with official support, had been making life intolerable for Avar villagers, some of whom were forced to leave the district where their families had lived for 150 years and cross the mountains to Daghestan in search of a refuge. The official destination of their planned deportation was the semi-desert grassland near Kyzlar in the Terek delta.[86]

Abkhazia, Georgia and Rossiya from 1992

As in all Caucasian conflicts, the role of Moscow's Rossiyan forces in Abkhazia was ambiguous. Their direct involvement began in September 1992, when Georgian soldiers were killed by missiles fired from a Russian base. Yeltsin denied any responsibility, but the chief bureaucrat of Russian militarism, General P. I. Grachov, warned Georgia (in terms of Moscow's official policy of claiming a right to interfere to protect Russians living outside Rossiya in other former USSR republics) that Russia ‘could not remain indifferent to the fate of Russians’ living in Abkhazia.[87] President Yeltsin's attitude, demonstrated at a meeting in Moscow attended by Shevardnadze, Ardzinba and representatives of the governments of the North Caucasian republics, did not resemble that of a neutral mediator, but of an imperial governor discipling a rebellious minor colony. He invoked Russia's dogma of territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing borders – the justification for perpetuation of the status quo so thoughtlessly embodied in the Helsinki Final Act and naively reaffirmed, without regard for inter-ethnic justice, in the CSCE's 1990 ‘Charter of Paris for a New Europe’.[88] In addition he voiced the convenient formula that Abkhazia was an ‘internal matter’ for Georgia – and made his prejudged viewpoint clear by repeatedly referring to ‘Georgia including Abkhazia’.[89] Yeltsin's real concern was to continue stationing Russian troops in ‘Transcaucasia’ and to maintain Russian control of the railway to Tbilisi. While Shevardnadze addressed the Rossiyan president rather sycophantically, Ardzinba's insistently reiterated principle that Abkhazia must be recognized as a separate republic, from which Georgian troops should be withdrawn, was brushed aside, until finally, under duress, he signed a ceasefire document which firmly subordinated Abkhazia to Georgia.[90] However, the Rossiyan parliament, at loggerheads with President Yeltsin, reacted by condemning Georgian policy in Abkhazia and demanding that military operations cease and Georgian troops be withdrawn – an ‘interference in Georgia's affairs’ which infuriated Shevardnadze.[91]

In October 1992, as Georgian troops resumed their assault on Gudauta, the North Caucasian Confederation halted its agreed withdrawal of volunteers from Abkhazia, and with their help the Abkhaz (using Russian tanks and missiles) began a steady advance on Sukhumi, their morale boosted by the more favourable hearing now given to Ardzinba in Moscow. The precise part played by Rossiya during the next year remains unclear – but duplicitous – as Rossiya succeeded in making each side think it was helping the other. In February 1993, however, after Georgian shelling of a Rossiyan unit the Russians retaliated with a night air raid on Sukhumi, and in March Russian participation on the Abkhazian side was authenticated, despite Moscow's denials. It was at this time that Gamsakhurdia's faction took advantage of the Georgian government's difficulties to renew its disruption in western Georgia.[92]

In late 1992 and early 1993 the United Nations and CSCE received appeals from all parties for help in resolving their problems, but the undeclared Russo-Georgian war continued, with another successful campaign by Abkhaz and Russian troops in June 1993, and a last desperate attempt by the Georgians to hold on to Sukhumi. In September Shevardnadze not only appealed to patriotic Georgians to go there as volunteers, but joined the defenders himself – and had to be flown out at the last minute before the city fell to the Abkhazians. Thus, in one observer's opinion, the Russian military, by helping the Abkhaz, achieved the double aim of punishing Georgia for not joining the CIS and Shevardnadze for his part in dismantling Russia's empire.[93] As one colonel explained, with characteristic Russian self-justification: ‘Russian officers consider Shevardnadze a traitor to the national interests of the Soviet Union, [because he] initiated and carried out the planned disintegration of the unified state. As long as he is in power there will be many “mercenaries” like me on the Abkhazian side.’[94] Georgia meanwhile had to retreat from the proud nationalism of its early days of independence and accept a Russian role in the Caucasus, on the one hand hoping this would mean ‘benevolent Russian intercession’ to ensure ‘stability’, but on the other fearing a renewal of Russian domination.[95]

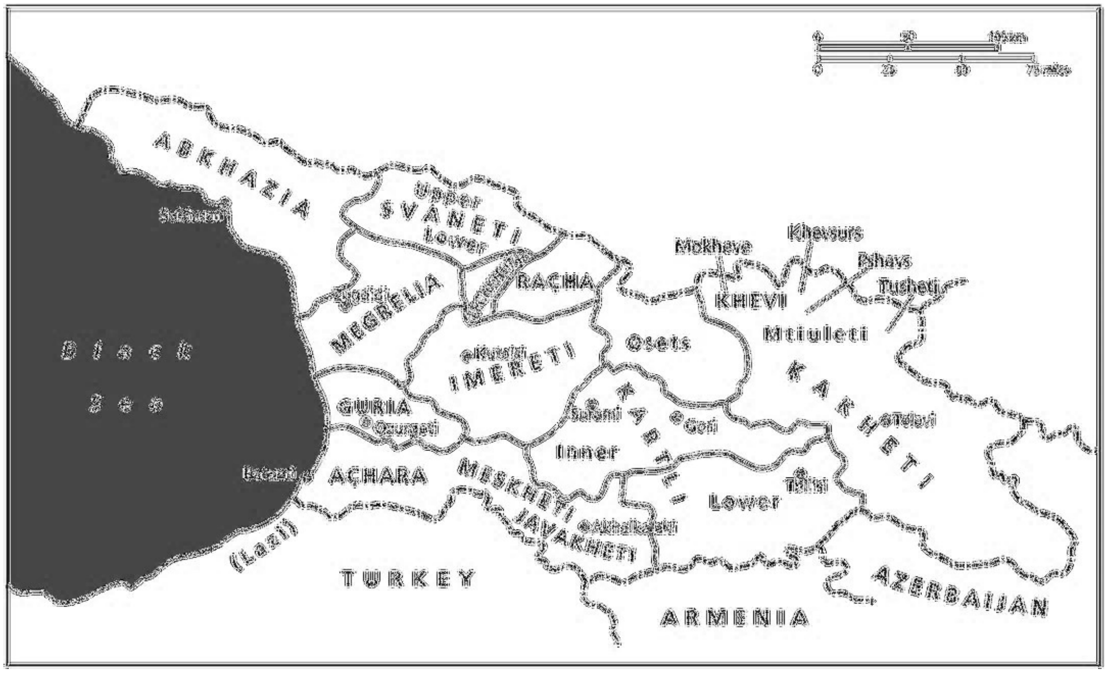
It was in Georgia, on the southern marches of the old Russian Empire, that the Russian military began its regeneration in 1992. Gamsakhurdia's self-destruction and Shevardnadze's accession to power in Tbilisi were instrumental in this, since Georgia's escalation of the war against Abkhazia provided the Russians with further pretexts for asserting themselves in a region which they considered to be strategically crucial. Out of the confusion of the war – in which the Rossiyan Army command lied blatantly about its involvement and there were frequent disagreements between Shevardnadze and Yeltsin, while Kitovani's Georgian army challenged Rossiya's 'Transcaucasian' Military District over Russian weapons dumps in Georgia – an agreement was nevertheless extorted by which the Rossiyan Army (scheduled to withdraw from Georgia in June 1992) could remain until 1995.[96] Shevardnadze, after the failure of his quixotic personal defence of Sukhumi, capitulated. Risking Georgia's hard-won independence, he concluded in November 1993 that Georgia had no alternative but to re-establish links with Russia, and he signed a ten-year treaty of 'friendship and co-operation' which gave Rossiya three military bases in Georgia and 'a decisive say in Georgian economic policy'.[97]

However sinister the machinations of the Russians in post-Soviet Caucasia, it seems clear that the Georgians themselves were to blame for the determined separatist movements in Abkhazia and South Osetia, since even Armenians living there considered that 'When the Georgians were on top, they treated us like animals. Now they are down they come to us saying, "You are our brothers" and begging for help.'[98] According to another observer, Georgia's débacle would not have become necessary,

> [h]ad reason and a spirit of generosity prevailed as Soviet order waned, [so that] it might have been feasible to construct a viable federal structure that would have kept Abkhazia and South Osetia within the orbit of Tbilisi and avoided the unnecessary bloodshed that Gamsakhurdia stoked…in South Osetia, with his

successor pursuing similarly short-sighted and tragic policies in Abkhazia.[99]

The same could be said about the Soviet Union as a whole – but reason and magnanimity were virtues little nurtured by 70 years of communist rule.


0 50 100 km
0 25 50 75 miles
Black Sea
ABKHAZIA
Sukhumi
Upper
SVANETI
Lower
Zugdidi
MEGRELIA
RACHA
Kutaisi
IMERETI
Mokheve
Khevsurs
Pshavs
Tusheti
KHEVI
Mtiuleti
Osets
KAKHETI
Telavi
GURIA
Ozurgeti
Surami
KARTLI
Gori
Inner
Lower
Tbilisi
Batumi
AÇHARA
MESKHETI
JAVAKHETI
Akhalkalaki
(Lazi)
TURKEY
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN

Map 28 The 'social regions' of modern Georgia, based on historical provinces or principalities, local languages differing from Kartlian (Megrelian, Svan, Laz, Abkhazian); and Georgia's considerable Osetian-, Azerbaijani-, and Armenian-speaking minorities (based on R. Gachechiladze, *The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics*, London, 1995, pp. 1–9, 14–26, 79–90).

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[1] Amkuab and Ilarionova, *Abkhaziya*, pp. 109, 214, 219, 220–2, 226–7, 229, 232, 233, 244–5, etc.; *The Economist*,

‘Oil pipelines – no way out’, pp. 92–3; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 27; 1992, no. 28.

[2] Shevardnadze, *Future*, pp. 30–2.

[3] Grossman, ‘The “second economy”’, pp. 34–5; Mars and Altman, ‘Cultural bases’, pp. 548–50, 559.

[4] The generally accepted translation of the title as *Repentance*, from Russian *Pokayaniye*, does not fully convey the meaning of the Georgian title ‘monanieba’ ‘confession’, ‘expiation’ and ‘atonement’; a translation better suited to the theme of the film might be *Penance* or *Retribution*: V. Dal, *Tolkovyy slovar zhivago velikorusskogo yazyka*, 2nd edn, St Petersburg, 1880–2, 4 vols. (reprint 1955), vol. III, p. 238; T. Gvarjaladze and I. Gvarjaladze, *English--Georgian Dictionary*, Tbilisi, 1975.

[5] G. Blankoff-Scarr, ‘Tengiz Abulaje and the flowering of Georgian film art’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 61–86; ‘A Georgian film exhumes Stalinist past’, *CDSP*, 1987, vol. 35, no. 5, pp. 1–7, 23; Shevardnadze, *Future*, pp. 32, 172–3.

[6] E. Fuller, ‘Filling in the “blank spots” in Georgian history: Noe Zhordania and Joseph Stalin’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 13, pp. 19–22; E. Fuller, ‘The republics in 1989: Georgia’, *RFE/RL*, no. 52, pp. 18–19; Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, p. 294; Shevardnadze, *Future*, pp. 32, 172–3, 200; S. Zaldasṭanishvili, *sakartvelos 1924 tṣlis ambokheba* (reprint of Munich edition, 1956), Tbilisi, 1994.

[7] V. Law, ‘Language myths and the discourse of nation-building in Georgia’, in G. Smith, *et al.*, eds., *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands*, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 168–9.

[8] A. Sakharov, ‘Stepen svobody’ (interview), *Ogonyok*, 1989, no. 31, pp. 26–7.

[9] Akhaltaksi, ‘Report from Georgia: On the Meskhetians’, pp. 304–5; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 217–18; E. Fuller, ‘What are the Meskhetians’ chances of returning to Georgia?’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 26, pp. 17–18; Cherkezishvili, *et al.*, *On Ethnic Composition*, pp. 10–11; E. Kh. Panesh and L. B. Yermolov, ‘Turki-Meskhetintsy (istoriko-etnograficheskiy analiz problemy)’, *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1990, no. 1, pp. 16–20, 23; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 24–6; 1991, nos. 30, 32.

[10] Georgians and Megrelians were shown as different nationalities in *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1890–1907, vol. XXXII, p. 150, and *Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. I, p. 113.

[11] Census 1989, Minneapolis, p. 444.

[12] In January 1988 the Georgian-language newspaper *Ḳomunisṭi* wrote that young Georgians were given to ‘pseudo-patriotic ideas…national particularism, boasting and haughty attitudes’ in relation to other nationalities: quoted in S. Jones, ‘Georgian national identity in the 1980s’, paper read at the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies Conference, March 1988, p. 16.

[13] *Pravda*, 1 July 1988, p. 7; speech by G. Gumbaridze at KPSS Plenum, 20–1 September 1989.

[14] E. Fuller, ‘Marneuli: Georgia's potential Nagorno-Karabakh?’, *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 477; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 454.

[15] In 1926 the Azerbaijanis comprised 5.4% of the population of Georgia, and in 1989 – 5.7%; over the same period the Georgians in the republic increased by 3.3 percentage points from 66.8% to 70.1%: Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, p. 289.

[16] Panesh and Yermolov, ‘Turki-Meskhetintsy’, pp. 21–3.

[17] E. Fuller, ‘Georgia's Adzhar crisis’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 32, p. 12; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 405.

[18] Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, p. 294; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 559. This programme became law in August 1989: Hewitt, ‘Abkhazia’, p. 277.

[19] The complexities of the initial phases of this chaotic period in Georgia are succinctly and clearly unravelled in J. Aves, *Paths to National Independence in Georgia, 1987–1990*, School of Slavonic and East European Studies Occasional Papers No. 15, 1991.

[20] Lang, *Modern History of Georgia*, pp. 170–1, 176, 189, 195–6.

[21] E. Fuller, ‘Abkhaz--Georgian relations remain strained’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 10, pp. 25–7; E. Fuller, ‘Personnel changes in Abkhazia’, *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 32, pp. 31–2; Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, p. 296; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 14; 1989, nos. 14--15, 30--1, 34, 36.

[22] *Pravda*, 20 September 1989, p. 20; Cherkezishvili, *et al.*, *On Ethnic Composition*, pp. 16, 20, 25, 31.

[23] *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 507, 518, 529; Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, pp. 28–9; Shevardnadze, *Future*, p. 175.

[24] Fuller, 'The year [1989] in review: Georgia', p. 18.

[25] Shevardnadze, *Future*, p. 193.

[26] E. Fuller, 'Official and unofficial investigations into Tbilisi massacre yield contradictory results', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 44, pp. 26–9; Gudava and Gudava, 'Historical survey', pp. 231–3; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 18–20, 22–3, 38, 42; Roxburgh, *Second Russian Revolution*, pp. 131–3, 135.

[27] *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 15–16; 1991, no. 11; J. Wishnevsky, 'Shevardnadze said to have threatened to resign in dispute over Tbilisi commission', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 5, pp. 1–3; Shevardnadze, *Future*, p. 195.

[28] E. Fuller, 'Georgia's alternative election results announced', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 43, p. 24; Jones, 'Georgia: a failed democratic transition', p. 294.

[29] E. Fuller, 'Georgia edges towards secession', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 22, pp. 14–18; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 36; 1990, no. 43.

[30] S. F. Jones, 'Georgia: the trauma of statehood', in I. Bremmer and R. Taras, eds., *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 521–2.

[31] E. Fuller, ‘Round Table coalition wins resounding victory in Georgian Supreme Soviet elections’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 46, pp. 13–16; Fuller, ‘Democratization threatened’, p. 43. As the writer already quoted points out, since Gamsakhurdia ‘was elected by 87% of those who voted in the presidential elections…His “dictatorial tendencies” were not perceived as a threat by most Georgians’.

[32] E. Fuller, ‘Gamsakhurdia's first 100 days’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 10, p. 10.

[33] E. Fuller, ‘How strong is the Georgian opposition?’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 42, p. 27.

[34] Fuller, ‘Democratization threatened’, p. 43; E. Fuller, ‘Georgia's National Guard’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 7, p. 19; Fuller, ‘Gamsakhurdia's first 100 days’, p. 11; Jones, ‘Adventurers or commanders?’, pp. 36–7, 42; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 39, 41, 51.

[35] *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 19, 21–2, 45–6; 1990, nos. 3–4, 11, 15–16.

[36] D. Imedashvili, *et al*., ‘Vesna v Tbilisi’, with commentary by M. Mamardashvili, *Moskovskiye novosti*, 8 April 1990, p. 5. Mamardashvili was eventually killed by bullies of the radical anti-communist party Round Table/Free Georgia: see Fuller, ‘Gamsakhurdia's first 100 days’, p. 10; Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, p. 38.

[37] Fuller, ‘Democratization threatened’, p. 43; Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, pp. 298–9; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 12, 22–3, 31–2, 35, 45, 47.

[38] The similarity of these measures to George Orwell's ‘thought-control’ has been pointed out; one of its effects was to produce press reports on events in Georgia which were so tendentious, incomplete and contradictory that they defied interpretation: Fuller, ‘Georgia's Adzhar crisis’, pp. 9, 10.

[39] Fuller, ‘Gamsakhurdia's first 100 days’, pp. 10–13; Fuller, ‘Georgia's National Guard’; E. Fuller, ‘Georgia threatens to expel journalists’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 7, pp. 18–20; Fuller, ‘Real independence’, p. 50; Jones, ‘Adventurers or commanders?’, p. 39; Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, pp. 294–5; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 47–8; 1990, nos. 32, 51.

[40] E. Fuller, ‘How wholehearted is support in Georgia for independence?’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 15, pp. 19–20; E. Fuller, ‘Georgia declares independence’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 16, pp. 11–12; E. Fuller, ‘The Georgian presidential elections’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 23, pp. 20–3; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 27.

[41] E. Fuller, ‘The Transcaucasian republics equivocate’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 36, pp. 40–2; Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, pp. 300–1; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 35–6.

[42] Fuller, ‘How strong is the Georgian opposition?’; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 37–40, 46, 48; J. Russell, ‘The two-edged sword of independence’, in J. Amodia, ed., *The Resurgence of Nationalist Movements in Europe*, Bradford, n.d., p. 88.

[43] E. Fuller, ‘Georgian president flees after opposition seizes power’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 3, pp. 4–7; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 2.

[44] M. Binyon, 'Trapped Georgian national leader commits suicide, says wife', *The Times*, 6 January 1994, p. 10; Fuller, 'Georgian president flees', p. 7; A. Lieven, 'Ousted Georgian leader refuses to compromise', *The Times*, 6 October 1993; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 3–5, 7, 15–16, 29–30, 33, 38; *The Times*, 'Zviad Gamsakhurdia' (obituary), 6 January 1994.

[45] E. Fuller, 'The Georgian parliamentary elections', *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 47, pp. 2–3; Jones, 'Adventurers or commanders?', pp. 36, 42–6; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 10, 12, 42.

[46] Fuller, 'Transcaucasia: ethnic strife threatens democratization', p. 23; V. Kadjaya, 'The pain of Svanetia', *Soviet Weekly*, 13 February 1988, p. 15; *RFE/RL*, 1988, nos. 461, 477; 1989, no. 43; 1991, nos. 5, 7, 19, 26; Shevardnadze, *Future*, p. 175.

[47] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, p. 39.

[48] N. Marr and M. Brière, *La langue géorgienne*, Paris, 1931, map between pp. 8 and 9; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. II, ethnic map of Transcaucasia opp. p. 16.

[49] E. Fuller, 'The South Ossetian campaign for unification', *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 49, pp. 17–20; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 48; 1990, no. 35.

[50] Fuller, 'South Ossetian campaign', p. 19; E. Fuller, 'Georgian parliament votes to abolish Ossetian autonomy', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 51, p. 8; *Pravda*, 20 September 1989; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 41, 49; 1990, no. 3.

[51] Fuller, ‘Georgian parliament votes’, p. 9; Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, p. 182; Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, pp. 295–6; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 35, 39, 51.

[52] S. Richards, ‘All hell let loose’, *The Times Saturday Review*, 14 December 1991, p. 14.

[53] Fuller, ‘Georgian parliament votes’, pp. 8–9; Fuller, ‘Democracy threatened’, p. 43; Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, pp. 295–6; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 51–2; 1991, nos. 3–5.

[54] *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 9, 11, 15, 19–20.

[55] E. Fuller, ‘South Ossetia: analysis of a permanent crisis’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 7, p. 22; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 1, 3–4, 7–8, 12, 16, 19.

[56] Fuller, ‘South Ossetia: analysis’, p. 21; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 52; 1991, nos. 3–8, 10–19, 21, 24.

[57] *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 8, 14–16, 18.

[58] Osetians in South Osetia numbered only 65,000 compared with 335,000 in the North Osetian ASSR: Census 1989, Minneapolis, pt 2, p. 444; Moscow, pt 2, p. 24; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 34, 41, 44.

[59] *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 19, 21, 24, 26, 36.

[60] Birch, ‘Ossetia: a Caucasian Bosnia’; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 35, 44, 51/2.

[61] A. S. Barsenkov, V. A. Koretskiy and A. I. Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1993, [part 2], pp. 215–17, 256–7; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 49–50; 1992, nos. 2, 5.

[62] *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 14 July 1992, pp. 1, 3; 17 July 1992, pp. 1, 3; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 18–20, 22, 28–9.

[63] *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 July 1992, p. 3; 18 July, p. 3; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 9, p. 7.

[64] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, p. 182.

[65] Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, pp. 295–6; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 35, 45.

[66] Georgian Republic, *Constitution* [*sakartvelos respubliḳis ḳonsṭiṭutsia*], October 1991, cited by Jones, ‘Georgia: a failed democratic transition’, pp. 295–7, 309 n.30; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 36, 45.

[67] *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 49.

[68] *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 11, 13. More than 98% of those who voted (51% of those eligible) were in favour.

[69] *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 7.

[70] *Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, 1926–47, vol. I, pp. 110–11; Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Gruziya*, pp. 246, 249–54, 259–61.

[71] *Abkhazian Letter*, 1988, quoted by Hewitt, 'Abkhazia', p. 282.

[72] E. Fuller, 'Georgia, Abkhazia and Checheno-Ingushetia', *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 6, p. 6; Hewitt, 'Abkhazia', pp. 271–5; Lakoba, 'On the political problems', p. 17; Cherkezishvili, *et al.*, *On Ethnic Composition*, pp. 12–13.

[73] Hewitt, 'Abkhazia', p. 286; Hewitt, ed., *Abkhazians*, pp. 18–19.

[74] Lakoba, 'History: 1917–1989', Hewitt, *Abkhazians*, p. 101.

[75] E. Fuller, 'Georgian prosecutor accused of inciting interethnic hatred', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 17, p. 12; Fuller, 'Personnel changes in Abkhazia'; Hewitt, 'Abkhazia', pp. 277, 282–3; V. Popkov, 'Soviet Abkhazia, 1989', quoted by Fuller, 'Georgian prosecutor accused', p. 13, and Hewitt, 'Abkhazia', p. 283; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 14–15, 30–1, 34, 36.

[76] Amkuab and Ilarionova, *Abkhaziya*, p. 13.

[77] At the 25 August session of the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet, of the 72 deputies present (of the total 140) 70 voted for secession; at the meeting on 31 August 71 were present to vote against it: *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 36.

[78] Amkuab and Ilarionova, *Abkhaziya*, pp. 17, 19, 20–1, etc.; E. Fuller, ‘Abkhazia on the brink of civil war?’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 35, p. 4; Hewitt, ‘Abkhazia’, p. 291; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 11, 13, 15, 35; 1992, no. 32.

[79] Yu. Anchabadze, ‘History: the modern period’, in Hewitt, ed., *Abkhazians*, pp. 132–5; Bedzhanov and Buzarov, ‘Vozrozhdeniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya’, p. 245; Fuller, ‘Georgian prosecutor accused’, p. 12, n. 6; Fuller, ‘Georgia, Abkhazia and Checheno-Ingushetia’, p. 5; Hewitt, ‘Abkhazia’, pp. 277, 282–3, 288; Lakoba, ‘History: 1917–1989’, p. 101; *Nedelya*, 1990, no. 7, in *CDSP*, 1990, vol. 42, no. 8, pp. 5–6; Ormrod, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 470; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 46, p. 33.

[80] H.-M. Ibrahimbeyli, Interview, *Izvestiya*, 21 September 1992, p. 12, in *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 38, p. 12; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 10, 13, 15–16, 21, 32.

[81] Amkuab and Ilarionova, *Abkhaziya*, p. 4; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 30, 33–5.

[82] General Karkarashvili, in the Georgian newspaper *Shvidi dghe*, 4–10 September 1992, p. 3, quoted by Hewitt, ‘Abkhazia’, p. 322, n. 102.

[83] D. Billingsley, ‘Military aspects of the war: the turning point’, in Hewitt, ed., *Abkhazians*, pp. 139–56; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 35–6.

[84] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, p. 3; E. Fuller, ‘Zviad Gamsakhurdia proposes abolition of Adzhar autonomy’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 48, pp. 13–14; Fuller, ‘Georgia's Adzhar

crisis', pp. 8–11; Jones, 'Georgia: a failed democratic transition', pp. 296, 304.

[85] Fuller, 'Georgia's Adzhar crisis', pp. 10–11; A. Mikadze, 'Strelba v vysokom kabinete', *Moskovskiye novosti*, 1991, no. 19, p. 4; Cherkezishvili, *et al.*, *On Ethnic Composition*, p. 10; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 19, 32.

[86] Dzidzoyev and Kadalayev, 'Minnye polya perestroyki', p. 19; Jones, 'Georgia: a failed democratic transition', p. 296; L. Leontyeva, 'Avartsy ukhodyat iz Gruzii', *Moskovskiye novosti*, 26 May 1991, p. 4; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 11.

[87] *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 36–8, 40.

[88] UK, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Charter of Paris*, pp. 1–3.

[89] Amkuab and Ilarionova, *Abkhaziya*, p. 234.

[90] Verbatim report of the Moscow meeting of leaders of republics of the Caucasian region (in Russian), in Amkuab and Ilarionova, *Abkhaziya*, pp. 208, 210–11, 216–17, 232–4, 244–6.

[91] *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 40.

[92] A. Lieven, 'Cavalier attitudes', *Times Magazine*, 13 November 1993, pp. 25–6, 30; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 41–2, 46; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, nos. 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 22.

[93] Lieven, ‘Cavalier attitudes’; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 42; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, nos. 15, 20, 22.

[94] A. Zhilin, ‘Nayomniki: za pravoye delo?’, *Moskovskiye novosti*, 18 July 1993, p. A4. Another source explains, however, that, ‘Some Georgian leaders consider that both the Osetian and the Abkhazian wars were fomented by the Central Committee of the KPSS’: D. Makarov, ‘Mezhdu lyubovyu i nenavistyu’, *Argumenty i fakty*, 1992, no. 34, p. 4.

[95] G. Charkviani, ‘Current political situation in Georgia: questions of independence and stability’, *ACRECES: Bulletin of the Aberdeen Centre for Russian, East and Central European Studies*, December 1994, pp. 6–7; and author's verbatim notes.

[96] *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 41, p. 54; no. 44, p. 58; no. 45, p. 69; no. 46, p. 48; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 4, pp. 3–4.

[97] S. Sebag-Montefiori, ‘Shevvy stakes all’, *Observer Colour Supplement*, October/November 1991, p. 24; *Whitaker's* Almanack, 1995, p. 886.

[98] Lieven, ‘Cavalier attitudes’, p. 26. This writer invokes the petty-gentry origins of the Georgians’ national culture of conspicuous consumption to explain their ‘excellent style and execrable politics…[their] self-obsessed arrogance and self-glorifying rhetoric…[their] propensity for spontaneous violence…[combined with] a national disinclination for steady and organized work’: *Ibid*., p. 30.

[99] Hewitt, ‘Yet a third consideration’, pp. 306–7.

20 North Caucasus, 1987–1993

Ethnic unrest and the Russian government

After 70 years of KPSS rule the North Caucasus indigenous countries shared the general economic problems of the USSR. In the Kabarda-Balkar ASSR, for instance, the KP secretary's report to the 1989 Moscow Plenum had merely repeated commonplaces about combining central planning with devolved financial management, without mentioning specific problems. By 1992, however, the republic's new secretary spoke of the necessity of ‘stabilization’ in all branches of the economy – mining, engineering, electricity, transport, etc. – and of transferring all enterprises to the responsibility of the republic, including strategic industries hitherto subordinated directly to Moscow. Unemployment was high, especially among the ethnic Kabardans.[1]

Since the North Caucasus native peoples had many reasons for wanting release from Russia's centralized control, there was considerable tension between the region's largely Russian provinces of Krasnodar, Stavropol and Rostov-on-Don, the essentially non-Russian autonomous provinces of the Cherkes, Karachays and Adygeys (administratively subordinated to Stavropol and Krasnodar), and the ‘autonomous republics’ of the Daghestanis, Chechens and Ingush, North Osetians, Kabardans and Balkars. Moreover, although the Abkhazians’ ASSR lay south of the mountains and was subordinated to Georgia, they belonged culturally to Circassian North Caucasus as relatives of the Abazas, Adygeys, Shapsugs, Cherkes and Kabardans. Similarly, many

South Osetians under Georgian rule had links with their counterparts in North Caucasus and wanted to be united with them. In cultural and social traditions the North Caucasus Russians were Christians, whereas most of their neighbours were Muslims, and this religious division with its powerful historical associations reinforced ethnic differences which, according to communist propaganda, ought to have become irrelevant. Islam, far from being eradicated in North Caucasus, still persisted both in its officially acceptable guise and in clandestine forms of Sufism and 'parallel Islam', and it had quickly regained prominence since 1989.[2]

A secondary problem, exacerbated by warfare in South Caucasia, Abkhazia and Chechenia, was the influx of migrants from the south into the 'Russian' provinces, especially Stavropol and, although the numbers involved were comparatively small, the local Russian settlers' anxiety and racial prejudice caused resentment against the flood of unregistered non-Russian refugees with their high birth rate. In fact, however, the main population increase in Stavropol province was accounted for by its Russian inhabitants,[3] who numbered 2.2 million in 1989 (77.0% of the whole, plus 85,000 Ukrainians and Belorussians), whereas all the non-Slav, indigenous Caucasian, nationalities in the province amounted to only 540,000 (19.1%). Explicit conflict was not widespread, but many residents felt prepared to defend their own nationality's rights if they were threatened and, while such unease was chronic among the native peoples, after 1989 it also increased among Russians, especially Cossacks.[4]

Daghestan

As everywhere else, Gorbachov's reforms were reflected in Daghestan's press. Until 1988 the monthly *Soviet Daghestan* had expressed mainly predictable views about the achievements of communism, the exclusively negative role of Islam and the ‘bourgeois falsification’ of Caucasian history in the West. In 1989 it changed radically, publishing informative articles and objective discussions about Islam and about Shamil's resistance to Russian imperialism. Such themes were aired publicly in 1989 at a conference in Makhachkala on the hitherto banned topic of the nineteenth-century liberation struggle of the Caucasian mountain peoples. At the same time in Daghestan and Chechenia-Ingushia (the areas where Islamic activity was strongest) the new confidence of adherents of Sufism was publicly demonstrated by a mass ceremony of incantational prayer (*dhikr*) in Makhachkala's main square, to protest against the corruption of religious officials and demand a cathedral mosque. This proved successful on both counts: in January 1990 the official mufti of North Caucasus and Daghestan, a stooge from Moscow, was dismissed and replaced by a Kumuk imam, and a site was allocated for the new mosque. In 1989–91 more than 300 mosques and prayer-houses in Daghestan were returned to religious use.[5]

Politically, however, Daghestan remained largely unreformed. While secular demonstrations were occurring everywhere in 1989, Daghestan remained rather quiet – partly from habitual caution. The republic's KPSS bosses, as a provincial *nomenklatura*, enjoyed privileges in Moscow which they were determined not to abandon for patriotic or religious sentiment. This was demonstrated by the first multi-party elections to the Congresses of People's Deputies, held in March 1990. The typical Asiatic – or Russian communist – system prevailed, whereby ‘Elected deputies stood to gain patronage for jobs and a strengthening of local tribal (*tukhum*) power', while any hope of oppositional candidates being elected was thwarted by the KPSS establishment's exploitation of local ethnic differences. As in every North Caucasus republic, thanks to the KP's monopoly of funds, media coverage and ballot-rigging, all district First Secretaries were elected unopposed. The only opposition parties were the recently formed Daghestan Social Democratic Party and the Daghestan Popular Front, both equally anti-communist and eager for Daghestan's sovereignty as an SSR, but hampered by a total lack of experience of democracy in practice.[6]

Daghestan was the last republic in the RSFSR to declare sovereignty, in May 1991, despite the fact that here and in neighbouring Chechenia Ingushia economic and social conditions were very poor, and the standard of living in Makhachkala was among the lowest in the USSR. One of the few events which evoked action from Daghestan's complacent authorities was a two-week-long demonstration in June 1991 for reduced air-fares to Mecca for those wanting to perform the Hajj, now that this was permitted. Passions ran so high that the Daghestan government – which could not have disbursed enough money to subsidize some 10,000 would-be pilgrims – declared a state of emergency and police opened fire on demonstrators. Before the Hajj crisis was defused by Saudi Arabia's offer to assist pilgrims from the USSR, similar demonstrations had occurred in other parts of North Caucasus under the influence of the Islamic Revival Party, which was founded in Astrakhan in June 1990 by an Avar, Ahmad-Qadhi Akhtayev. This party, although proscribed in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, spread to other parts of the Soviet Union, and was particularly active in North Caucasus. There was also an Islamic Democratic Party, founded in Daghestan, and the inevitable Russian 'Stalin

Movement'. Meanwhile dissatisfaction with the ethnic territories and administrative borders made in the 1920s by the Russian government imposed strains on the harmony which was said to exist among the thirty-three indigenous peoples of polyglot Daghestan. In reality, consciousness of specific ethnicity had always been important, as was the dominance of the three largest peoples, the Avars, Dargos and Kumuks. Their leaders were not always united, but they shared between them the top government posts, and in the election of a new mufti there was one candidate from each. Elsewhere in North Caucasus Islamic unity was weaker: in 1989 the Muslims of Chechenia-Ingushia, North Osetia, Kabarda-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkesia all broke away from the North Caucasus Religious Board in Makhachkala and formed their own separate kadiates, disregarding the traditional authority of Daghestan in North Caucasian Islam.[7]

Special problems of national identity faced the Daghestanis in the post-Soviet period. While many prided themselves on their conservation of Muslim faith, they were at a low ebb so far as the culture and languages of Daghestan's many ethnic communities were concerned. As a result of many arbitrary relocations and the KPSS policy of 'merging of nations' to which they too had been subjected, most of the native languages were in decline, especially in towns, where Russian influence was strong and many young people spoke a patois of native languages mixed with Russian. If Daghestan was to avoid becoming amorphous and retain a cohesive identity, it needed a common language, but the question 'which one?' remained hard to decide. Since 1920 they had gone through stages of having as their lingua franca first Turkish, then from 1928 nine state languages including Russian and Azerbaijani, and since 1936 Russian alone. The cultural and practical utility of Russian made many Daghestanis reject any other choice. From the Islamic point of view Arabic would be desirable, but this was impracticable since, although some educated Muslims still knew Arabic, almost no teachers survived. Others pressed for the adoption of a Turkic language, probably Turkish, using the Roman alphabet. Yet others were against any imported language (especially Turkish, considering Turkey's bad record for treatment of its own minorities) and emphasized the need to develop the native Caucasian languages, of which, however, only Kumuk, a Turkic language, had any status as a lingua franca.[8]

What did emerge was that in Daghestan after 70 years of rule by the KPSS all nationalities, even the smallest, had if anything increased their specific national self-awareness, despite developing at the same time a stronger sense of Daghestani nationhood. In 1989 it became possible to condemn as another communist-created disaster the mass ‘resettlement’ of highland communities on the low-lying east coast and northern plains. Totalitarian theories had changed ethnic distribution in Daghestan greatly: because of ‘planned’ deportations the high valleys were now almost completely depopulated, but the northern lowlands of the Terek delta and Caspian coast – formerly home only to Kumuks, Nogays, Chechens and Cossacks – had become ethnically very mixed and overpopulated, causing unfair pressure on their original inhabitants and greater risk of ethnic conflicts, as well as environmental damage by soil erosion, salination and overuse of pesticides. The original territories of many nationalities still dominated the mountain valleys (as well as the high gorges and hilltops) but here, as in the steppe, population pressure and poverty were making many natives leave Daghestan in search of employment farther afield, and those who found work now formed a considerable diaspora.[9]

The pastoral Nogays' main problem was that, while some 13,000 of them lived in Karachay-Cherkesia, most (nearly 64,000) occupied the arid steppe north of the Terek. More than 28,000 of these lived within Daghestan, but because of numerous boundary changes they were administratively separate from other Nogay communities, who now lived in neighbouring areas of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (6,900) and Stavropol province (28,600). Policies varied in these three territories, but in all of them the Nogays – who, like most small nationalities, feared they would lose their national culture – were under pressure from new immigrants, principally Dargos and Russians. Consequently, the steppe Nogays demanded a separate autonomous territory.[10] Their neighbours the Kumuks – whose identity as one of the largest and most influential communities in Daghestan was not threatened – also demanded separate national autonomy, with a view to combining with other Turcophone peoples and preventing further immigration into their ancestral territory, and they also set up their own Islamic Board.[11]

A different problem stemmed from the 1944 deportation of the Chechens who had lived not in Chechenia but in the Khasavyurt and Aukh districts of Daghestan. As the latter district had been repopulated by forcibly importing 7,000 Laks and 3,000 Avars (many of the latter expelled from Georgia), few of the Chechens on their return to Daghestan were able to repossess their homes, and most were resettled on Kumuk territory near Khasavyurt. In 1989 these Chechens campaigned for return to their ancestral district of Aukh (now called 'New Lak') but, while some Laks agreed to move out to accommodate them, the Avars refused. This rearrangement created yet another conflict, since the Kumuks violently rejected the settlement of the ousted Laks in ‘age-old Kumuk territory’.[12] In their turn, the Avars expelled from Georgia in 1991 could not be accommodated in the Avar mountain region, but were allocated land in the Terek delta near Kyzlar, where Georgia had rented winter pastures for many years. Such events illustrated the manifold interconnections existing in the Caucasus, and the shrinking possibilities for relocation ‘in land-starved Daghestan, where there are continual community squabbles over every patch of lowland’, to which its current occupiers aggressively claimed exclusive rights.[13] The most intractable problems faced the Lezgis, who made up a very high proportion of the unemployed in Daghestan. Their homeland was in the south, and almost as many lived beyond the river Samur in Azerbaijan and, like the similarly divided Tsakhurs and Avars, were under pressure to assimilate to the Azerbaijanis. Complaints about discrimination against the Daghestanis in Azerbaijan emerged in the 1980s, and through cross-border contacts a Lezgi national movement Sadval (Unity) organized demonstrations to demand a border revision and reunion of the whole Lezgi people. However, as not only Azerbaijan took steps to close the border with Daghestan, but MVD troops also arrived in 1992 to do the same on the ‘Russian’ side, there seemed to be little likelihood of this ever being permitted.[14]

Circassia

In western regions of North Caucasus, too, Gorbachov's reforms released not only undercurrents of Islam, but also pent-up national sentiments among the indigenous peoples. In the Kabarda-Balkar ASSR, for instance, the 759,600 population consisted of 48.2% Kabardans, 9.4% Balkars and 32% Russians. The latter, although a minority, controlled industry and, as the KP leadership consisted mainly of

Russified Kabardans, loyalty to Moscow was assured. As the Russians in Kabarda-Balkaria were (as everywhere) almost entirely ignorant of the native languages, whereas more than 80% of Balkars and Kabardans had a command of Russian, the colonial situation was conspicuous. It was also confirmed by the fact that 83.1% of Russians in the republic lived in towns, while the rural Russians were in traditionally Cossack districts. Many of the indigenous people were also urban, but 51.3% of Balkars and 56.9% of Kabardans lived and worked on the land.[15]

Anti-Russian sentiments in Circassia were most prevalent among the Karachays and Balkars, because of their long banishment by the Soviet régime, and its aftermath of slander and discrimination which the authorities had done nothing to prevent. In November 1989 the USSR Supreme Soviet at last condemned the forcible deportation of the Karachay, Balkar, Chechen, Ingush and Kalmyk peoples (as well as Germans, Crimean Tatars and Meskhis), but the final retraction of false accusations against them did not come until 1991, in decrees granting them 'full rehabilitation' – nearly 50 years after the event.[16]

As the Circassian (Cherkes) people with whom the Karachay were combined in one ASSR – in the proportion 31% Karachay to 17% Cherkes, Abazas and Kabardans (as well as Russians, 42%) – were not included in the accusation, and in fact had abetted the persecution of their neighbours, it was the Karachays who in 1988 first campaigned, through their party Jamaat (Arabic, *jama^{c}ah* 'community'), for rehabilitation and autonomy. The Karachays complained of exclusion from responsible administrative posts and discrimination against native languages in schools, but during 1988–9 many schools resumed teaching in the

Karachay, Cherkes, Abaza and Nogay languages. In August 1989 a Karachay delegation went to Moscow to request separation from the Circassians in a separate autonomous republic. If this were granted, the next logical step might have been to detach Balkaria from Kabarda and (despite the mountainous terrain) unite the two Turcophone communities into a Karachay-Balkar republic. However, such uncontrolled ethnic activity, inspired by the Confederation of Mountain Peoples on the one hand, and the Assembly of Turkic Peoples on the other, alarmed Moscow's imperialists and their compliant allies in the North Caucasus administrations. So, when in November 1990 a congress of Karachay deputies made a unilateral declaration of sovereignty of the separate 'Karachay SSR', the official Karachay-Cherkes Supreme Soviet retaliated by proclaiming a sovereign Karachay-Cherkes republic, and this was confirmed in July 1991 by the RSFSR's upgrading of the Karachay-Cherkes AP to an SSR, with its autonomy increased by removal from subordination to Stavropol province.[17]

Similarly the Balkars – speaking the same language as the Karachays but combined into one ASSR with the Kabardans – created a national-democratic movement called Töre[18] (Turkish, 'customary court') which demanded rehabilitation and compensation for their deportation. The latter had been 'equivalent to historical death…reduced us to a third of our former numbers [and] robbed us not only of "wife and home" but even of a gravestone' – a reference to the destruction of cemeteries in the Balkar homeland during their exile and to the fact that on return they were excluded from their former territory in the mountainous south of the republic and scattered among Kabardan collective farms.[19] The Balkar writer quoted here asserted 'the indigenous inhabitants' right to control the use of natural resources…to freedom of residence and movement within and beyond the republic, to employment for our trained young people, and to a home'. Now these things were being denied them by a flood of incomers, consisting largely of retired Russian officials and army officers who enjoyed relative prosperity and could have comfortable retirement homes built, while the Balkars lived in squalor. Meanwhile, state industry – the mining and processing of tungsten and molybdenum – continued to pollute the environment with noxious waste-dumps. In addition, Balkar national culture and language were undermined by 40 years of official policy, and two generations had eschewed it in favour of the more 'prestigious' Russian. So far as cultural facilities were concerned, the Balkars, as a numerically minor element in the republic (9.4% of the population as compared with Kabardans, 48%, and Russians, 32%) suffered chronic unfairness in allocation of funds, which left them as an underprivileged class in their own land.[20] When these protests emerged the Kabarda-Balkar republic's KP secretary lamented, hypocritically, that 'throughout the years of Soviet power the population of the republic had lived and worked as one happy family', but now it was affected by inter-ethnic tension. Apart from the ubiquitous problems of neglected national languages, history and culture, tension arose from the unresolved question of rehabilitation: on 30 March 1991 the first Congress of the Balkar people pressed for restitution of their full civil and economic rights. In a speech 'On the genocide and its consequences' M. Kuchmezov spoke not only about the 1944 deportation, but the earlier massacre of Balkar villagers in the Cherek gorge by Soviet forces in November--December 1942. State secrecy had concealed the truth, but he believed that – despite the high proportion of Balkars who fought courageously against the German invaders – the Balkars were used by the KPSS leadership as scapegoats for the Germans' success in raising their flag on Mount Elbrus in August 1942, and to lend substance to the NKVD's propaganda that local ‘bandits’ active against the Russians in the Caucasus were blamed for the Red Army's defeats.[21] Kuchmezov declared that, as the Balkars had not received restitution for their war-time sufferings, and their homeland was still denied to them, ‘the genocide against us still continues’.[22]

In December 1991 the Balkars continued their National Congress, demanding political equality with the Kabardans and an end to discrimination in educational and cultural funding, and a National Council was founded in preparation for a referendum on Balkar sovereignty and a separate republic. Although the Kabarda-Balkar Supreme Soviet repudiated the Balkar National Council, the latter – encouraged, no doubt, by the creation of the Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Peoples and the Assembly of Turkic Peoples in Makhachkala – held their referendum in February 1992, receiving 94% support for the foundation of a sovereign Balkar republic. The Assembly of Turkic Peoples also supported this and, rather unrealistically, proclaimed the creation of a Caucasus--Black Sea Commonwealth.[23]

The Russian government's rejection of any redrawing of boundaries was re-emphasized in 1990 in the Kabarda-Balkar ASSR when its first secretary, V. M. Kokov, stated that it was ‘one and indivisible’, and in February 1991 its Supreme Soviet accepted the palliative of upgrading from ASSR to SSR status. However, it now appeared that ever since 1922 some Kabardans too had resented being bound into the same republic as the Balkars, and desired separation, especially as a step towards a general Circassian union. With the demise of the USSR the first Congress of the Kabardan People in January 1992 demanded the revival of the separate Kabardan Republic without the Balkars and, as the

Kabardans in any case ruled the roost in Nalchik, it suited the Balkars not to oppose further moves made at the second Kabardan Congress in May. However, here too Moscow called the tune, and the republic's KP and Supreme Soviet now talked of ‘stabilization’, and the ‘danger’ that altering existing territories would cause a ‘slide into ethnic catastrophe’. Declaring that unofficial national congresses and ‘infringement of the territorial integrity’ of Kabarda-Balkaria were unconstitutional, in September 1992 the Moscow government called in Rossiyan troops to arrest Yu. Shanibov, the deputy chairman of the Kabardan National Congress and president of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples.[24]

It was the smallest of the North Caucasian national territories, the Adygey AP, that took the lead in Circassian self-determination by declaring its sovereignty as an ASSR in October 1990, under its soviet chairman, later president, Aslan Jarimov. The fact that the Russian Supreme Soviet confirmed this upgrading and removed the Adygey Republic from the jurisdiction of Krasnodar province suggests that Moscow saw little danger of ‘ethnic catastrophe’ arising here. Although many of Krasnodar's Russian residents, calling themselves the ‘Union of Slavs of Adygeya’, did oppose this development, the Ukrainian Kuban Cossacks (Maykop division) accepted it, and it was claimed that the flexibility and moderation of the Adygey leadership in relation to the 68% Slav majority in their territory demonstrated exemplary balance and stability contrasting with other North Caucasus republics.[25]

On the map of the USSR the territory of the Adygey people looked rather insignificant, as did its total of 95,439 Adygeys, but with nearly 21,900 in the rest of Krasnodar province, the neighbouring Kabarda-Balkar ASSR and Karachay-Cherkes AP, there were altogether 117,339 Adygeys in the western part of Circassia. Adding the 469,600 other Adygs (Circassians) – Kabardans, Cherkeses, Abazas and an unknown number of Shapsugs – the total number of self-aware Circassians approached 600,000, which made them the second-largest native nation in North Caucasus after the Chechens. While this was dwarfed by more than 2,000,000 Russians in Krasnodar and Stavropol provinces as a whole, in their three national territories the Circassians nearly equalled the Russians, who totalled about 710,000. Thus, even in the late twentieth century, despite the terrible vicissitudes through which they had passed during the previous 220 years, the Circassians still formed a significant presence in their much fragmented homeland. As we have seen, a Circassian Assembly (Adyge Hase) had been founded in Adygeya in 1988. Like other North Caucasian national liberation movements they were greatly encouraged when the first Congress of Mountain Peoples took place in Abkhazia, and in September 1990 Adyge Hase met again, with representatives from the Kabardan, Cherkes, Adygey and Abkhaz homelands. Because of the various names used in Russian, it was often unclear whether *Adyge* meant Kuban Adygeys in particular, or the Adygs (Circassians) in general. To clarify this, Adygey, Kabardan, Cherkes and Shapsug representatives, meeting at the Adygeyan Research Institute in Maykop in 1991, agreed that their common ethnonym should henceforth be 'Adygs' in their own language, and 'Circassians' (Russian 'Cherkesy') in other languages. Adyge Hase asserted Circassian unity: 'The Kabardans, Cherkes and Adyges are a single ethnic group, forming one people with a single language.'[26] Not all agreed, however: a book published in Kabarda-Balkaria claimed that Adyge Hase was a *Kabardan* organization, and although its aim was said to be 'a federation of the Adyg peoples and the regeneration of

Adyg culture', it did not even mention Adygeya – apparently illustrating a continuing assumption of superiority among the Kabardans.[27]

One further remnant of the Circassian people which had seemed extinct, and was not even recorded in the 1989 census, also re-emerged from oblivion. In the nineteenth century the Shapsugs were the most numerous of all west Circassian tribes (perhaps some 300,000 people), occupying a swath of land 50 miles wide along the lower Kuban west of Yekaterinodar and stretching south-east between the mountains and the sea towards Sochi. After the *muhajir* and Russian Civil War their survivors remained in only two small districts: one at the western end of the Adygey AP near the Kuban, the other along the Black Sea coast between Tuapse and Sochi.[28] Here a Shapsug National District had existed from c. 1925 to 1939 when, like nearly all districts for small nationalities, it was abolished.[29] Despite their loss of many aspects of traditional culture, the Shapsugs maintained customs governing hospitality, mutual aid, weddings and clan cemeteries. While their mosques had been closed in the 1930s and Islamic rituals were scarcely practised, pre-Islamic beliefs were still widely observed, including reverence for memorial cairns as venues for dance rituals. Like the rest of Circassia, the Black Sea coast had lost most of its former agricultural and horticultural occupations, apart from bee-keeping and harvesting hazelnuts and walnuts in what remained of their forest. Most employment opportunities were connected with tourism and health resorts and, as in various North Caucasus communities, many Shapsugs became career soldiers. Although Shapsugs enjoyed many of the amenities of modern living, they were also aware of local environmental problems ranging from pollution of the mountain rivers and Black Sea to the wholesale felling of ancient deciduous forest and the consumption of land by the construction of ever more motor roads.[30]

So far as 'inter-ethnic harmony' was concerned, contacts between Shapsugs and Russians were limited, with very few mixed marriages. When the Shapsugs started campaigning in 1991 for the restoration of their national district near Tuapse, their Russian neighbours arrogantly adopted what became a typical North Caucasian response: they formed the local self-appointed Sochi Cossack organization, because 'the current anarchy forces us to try to impose order'[31] – thus inevitably inciting further the Shapsugs' patriotic sentiments. The Shapsugs also resented the 'blank spots' in their history which had been strictly maintained by the Russian authorities, especially with reference to the KPSS Terror of the 1930s--50s, and were aware of the damage done to their national culture by wilful official neglect under Brezhnev. Specific Russian actions perceived as offensive by the Black Sea Shapsugs included changing their district's name in 1951 from 'Shapsug' to 'Lazarev' – thus honouring of one of the imperial generals most zealous in Russia's subjugation of the Caucasus. Russian disregard for the feelings of small nations was further demonstrated in 1988, when celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Russia's foundation of Sochi and Tuapse – now very popular as holiday resorts for Russians – aroused great indignation among the Shapsugs. Originally built as forts, these towns were for Circassians symbols of Russian imperialism and oppression, but during the 'celebrations' no reference whatever was made to the long Russo-Circassian War, thus implying that no settlements had existed there before the Russian towns, that 'Krasnodar territory' had no history before Russian colonization, and that the Shapsugs had never existed.[32] Here too the Hase movement campaigned for a variety of issues, ranging from the reinstatement of

Shapsug place-names to the restoration of their national autonomous district. There was, however, little chance of success, considering the great preponderance of Russians in the province.[33]

In post-communist ‘Rossiya’ the Circassians, because of the expulsion of their ancestors in the nineteenth century, were the only nation resembling the Armenians in having a large emigrant community. Among this diaspora, living chiefly in Turkey (c. 2,000,000), Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, an Adyge Hase movement was formed in 1952 in the USA with the aim of helping their brethren in the USSR to revive Circassian culture. Although this led to a World-wide Circassian Congress in Nalchik in 1991, the return of many Circassians to their homeland seemed unlikely so long as it was ruled by the Rossiyan Federation.[34]

While changes were slowly occurring in the Circassian territories in 1988–91, wider and less predictable developments embracing the whole of North Caucasus were occurring independently of the KPSS régime. The Congress of Mountain Peoples held in Sukhum in August 1989 at the instance of Abkhazia, and the resulting Assembly of Mountain Peoples, along with the appearance of the Islamic Renaissance Party, demonstrated an upsurge of political awareness and a desire to go beyond piecemeal changes towards a united community embracing the whole region, from the Black Sea to the Caspian, with the ultimate aim of a Caucasian Federal Republic[35] on the model of the Mountain Republic of 1918 and 1921.

The Chechens and Ingush

The actual disunity among North Caucasian peoples was demonstrated even in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, where the political bodies which emerged in 1988 included not only the Caucasus society and the Vaynakh Democratic Party, combining Chechen and Ingush membership, but also separate Ingush and Chechen Popular Fronts. Because a large part of Ingushia had not been restored to them after their return from exile, in February 1989 the Ingush petitioned Moscow for restoration of their separate AP as originally assigned in 1934. At that time the frontier of the Ingush AP with North Osetia between Ordjoniḳidze and Beslan had lain within 8 miles of the Terek, from where Ingushia stretched some 30 miles to the east. After the abolition of Ingushia-Chechenia most Ingush territory had been added to North Osetia[36] but, as we saw in Chapter 15, when in 1957 Ingushia's territory was restored, the formerly Ingush area lying to the east of the outskirts of Ordjoniḳidze (hence called 'Suburban district'), including nearly forty formerly Ingush villages, was not returned to them, but was retained by the North Osetian ASSR. Following the USSR government's admission that the deportations were illegal, and a violent clash between Ingush and Osetians in Ordjoniḳidze in March 1990, the Ingush held mass meetings for several days in Nazran, their administrative centre, demanding repossession of their land. While all North Caucasian Muslim republics supported the Ingush, demonstrations against them were held by Christians in North Osetia, who enjoyed Russian support. As Ingush people moved into Suburban district intending to reoccupy their former villages, North Osetia banned the immigration and employment of people who were not citizens of their republic. However, Ingushes continued to move in, encouraged by the March 1991 decree annulling the deportations and by Yeltsin's statement that Suburban district should be returned to them, and violence continued between them and Osetian squatters. Meanwhile the USSR Supreme Soviet demanded that ASSRs reaffirm their subjection to the RSFSR by signing Gorbachov's Union Treaty, but the Chechen-Ingush government refused to do this until Ingushia's claim to Suburban district was resolved, and no solution was achieved before the August 1991 Moscow coup. Thereafter, because their claim was disregarded, the Ingush held a referendum in December 1991, in which 68% of eligible voters demanded a separate Ingush republic including Suburban district, with the district of Vladikavkaz lying east of the Terek as its capital.[37]

Unrest had also spread among the Chechens, who for decades had had to tolerate denigration of practically everything in their past – a battery of ethnic prejudices including their slanderous mass condemnation as traitors and bandits, used to justify their deportation – Russian dismissal of their religious and social traditions as fanaticism and backwardness; and the defamation of their national heroes in official versions of the nineteenth-century Caucasian War – which was in fact their ancestors' struggle against Russian imperialism. One Chechen teacher wrote: 'We've heard so much about the accursed past of our ancestors, about their savage manners and customs, that all our history seems an endless nightmare.'[38] In 1988 those who dared to take a positive view of the Chechen people's history were castigated in a communist periodical by one of their own leaders, who wrote, as was required of him, that his countrymen's 'national arrogance' and defiant determination to preserve their traditions and beliefs showed ingratitude for the benefits bestowed upon them by the October Revolution, and that Chechens in exile supposedly harboured no bitterness about their deportation, but praised the 'profound humanism' of the Soviet régime and the 'human kindness' of their Russian 'elder brother'.[39] A different picture was painted by Jauhar Dudayev, whose experience in exile in Kazakstan had not included hospitality, but only poverty and spiteful treatment by Russian neighbours.[40] While the strength of Islam among the Chechens, in the form of Sufi brotherhoods, was well known,[41] it was not religion but ecological and social problems – atmospheric pollution from chemical works, lack of roads and public services, and social injustice – that inspired the first demonstrations in the Chechen-Ingush Republic in February 1990.[42] Protests in five districts resulted in the dismissal of their KP secretaries, but this did not reassure Chechen democrats that requests for autonomy would produce any changes. The Russian authorities' effrontery in continuing to suppress the truth about the deportation was demonstrated when a Chechen newspaper published a report on the Khaybakh massacre, including a report by a survivor, Ziauddin Malsagov: the KGB closed down the newspaper – but in 1990 Malsagov and others went and excavated the site.[43] At the second Congress of Mountain Peoples in September 1990 it was a Chechen scholar, Said-Hasan Abumuslimov, who declared that no true sovereignty could be achieved until the reactionary KPSS leaderships of all North Caucasus republics were ousted completely.[44]

Meanwhile Jauhar Dudayev, a Soviet air force general and garrison commander in the Estonian city of Tartu, arrived in Chechenia. Dudayev was a Chechen, born in in 1944 just before the deportation to Kazakstan, where the family had to stay until 1957. Dudayev single-mindedly pursued education and a military career which took him to major-general's rank, and what he saw of the Baltic revolution convinced him that he must campaign similarly for Chechen liberation. His attendance at the first Chechen National Congress in

November 1990 brought immediate recognition of his political potential. He was elected as its chairman and presided over its declaration of sovereignty. Resigning from the air force in March 1991, he moved from Estonia to Chechenia-Ingushia and took up residence in its capital, Groznyy, where he (the highest-ranking indigenous leader in North Caucasus) was acknowledged by the Chechen insurgents as their leader in the struggle to overthrow the Russian colonial government in Groznyy, demanding that Russia formally end the Caucasus War by retrospectively signing a peace treaty with the Chechen state.[45]

Groznyy was a fairly typical middle-sized Soviet Russian city with some 404,000 inhabitants in 1987. Its educational and aesthetic facilities included a petroleum institute, a university and a pedagogical institute; and there were three professional theatres, a concert hall, a symphony orchestra and a circus. Apart from the ubiquitous signs and smells of the oil industry it was not an unpleasant town to live in. A souvenir postcard cover declared:

> With every passing year Groznyy becomes an even more handsome city. Whole new districts of well-appointed flats are springing up. The central streets and avenues have been completely transformed. New constructions include the airport, cinemas, gymnasia, kindergartens and schools. There are spacious parks and many smaller tree-lined squares, justifying the city's reputation as one of the greenest cities in North Caucasus.[46]

North Osetia

Even Russia's ‘loyal’ North Osetia was excited by the spirit of self-determination, but developments here were complicated by ethnic divisions within the North Osetian ASSR and its relations with its neighbours – involving Chechenia-Ingushia, Vladikavkaz's Suburban district and Georgia. In North Osetia from 1989 onwards Georgia's harassment of South Osetia necessitated the finding of accommodation and food for some 59,000 South Osetians refugees, in addition to 5,000 ‘internal’ refugees from Suburban district, resulting from the conflict with the Ingush.[47]

As in other non-Russian communities, ‘a generation of Osetians had grown up whose command of their mother tongue was weak or non-existent, and whose knowledge of the history and culture of their nation was even worse’.[48] Since the 1980s, the Osetian language had been reintroduced in North Osetian schools, but was allotted only two or three hours per week compared with nine to twelve for Russian. Only in 1989 did Osetian become the language of instruction in primary schools in districts with an Osetian majority – but in Vladikavkaz this meant only one school. In the two Digor Muslim districts, their dialect was used in primary classes and, when the Osetian government introduced a law on official languages of the republic, there was considerable pressure for recognition of Digor as a separate language from Osetian (Iron). The time allotted on local radio and television to Osetian language programmes remained minimal.[49]

In July 1990 North Osetia declared its sovereignty, and patriots began pressing for union with the South Osetian autonomous province in Georgia, while their claim to possession of the regional capital was emphasized by reverting from the Russified Georgian name ‘Ordzhonikidze’ to ‘Vladikavkaz-Dzaujikau’[50] (the Russo-Osetian compound name by which it had been known in 1944–54). Many people also wanted to change the name of the republic from the Russified Georgian form ‘Oseti[a]’ to ‘Alania’, the name of their assumed Iranian ancestors who were known as the Alans until the fourteenth century, and whom, like all nationalists, they considered to have been ‘great’ and powerful. The North Caucasus steppe was assumed to have been ‘their’ homeland, where they had ‘always’ lived (although the Vaynakhs appear to have at least as good a claim to it as the Alans). ‘Alanomania’ became so widespread among the intelligentsia that one new political party called itself the ‘Union for the Regeneration of Alania’, and indeed in 1994 the country was officially renamed the ‘Republic of North Osetia--Alania’. This decision was taken without consideration for the Osetians’ neighbours, the Balkars, Karachays and Ingush, all of whom also declared that their origins went back to the Alans; it was even more unfortunate that some Osetian nationalists claimed racial ‘superiority’ because of their supposed ‘purely Aryan’ origin.[51]

North Osetian nationalist assumptions were also reflected in the republic's Supreme Soviet elections in March 1990, which gave 105 of the 150 seats (70%) to Osetian candidates, in contrast with their 53% share of the population (Russians came second with 35 seats). Although the Osetians held the lion's share of well-paid posts, some of them put the blame for all shortcomings in the republic on the Russians, as usurpers of power and socially prestigious positions.[52] The historical justification for this view is obvious, but a social survey concluded that ‘so far as social roles are concerned, the perception of Russians as the imperial nation is simply a myth’, because ‘Most of the Russian population living in North Osetia, as in the other

North Caucasus republics, are not employed in the role of management and the “prestigious” occupations, but in the production of material goods, above all in the main branches of industry operating in the republic.’ Even in the civil service and the republic's administration Osetians occupied a high proportion of top posts.[53] Thus, considering the North Osetians’ generally obedient attitude to Moscow, they exhibited considerable political self-confidence, so that, surprisingly, North Osetia was the first ASSR in the Soviet Union to declare its sovereignty (20 July 1990), and in December 1991 it proclaimed itself a ‘union republic’ (SSR) within the RSFSR. It was Zviad Gamsakhurdia's oppression of Georgia's South Osetians, however, that stimulated national consciousness and the desire for unification of the two halves of the nation, under the nationalistic slogan ‘One language, one people, one republic’. This aim was adopted by the People's Union (Ademon Tsadis) and, although rejected by Yeltsin, it inspired the first Congress of the Osetian People (held in Vladikavkaz in December 1991 with delegates from both North and South Osetia) to offer a direct challenge not only to Moscow, but also to Tbilisi, by issuing a declaration on the ‘restoration’ of Osetian unity.[54]

Meanwhile relations between the North Osetians and their neighbours the Ingush descended into violence when the latter followed up their claim to Suburban district with mass meetings in Nazran in March 1990. As the Ingush wanted to oust the Osetians who lived there, a counter-demonstration was held in Ordjonikidze, and antagonism culminated in April 1991, when a brawl between an Ingush and an Osetian led to a month of armed clashes in which police and soldiers intervened and many people were wounded. After August 1991 Yeltsin's RSFSR government proposed that Suburban district should be ceded to the Chechen-Ingush Republic, but this was rejected by the North Osetian Supreme Soviet and, because of continuing Ingush demands, in late 1991 North Osetia formed a republican guard and defence committee, and authorized citizens to possess firearms. After its declaration of RSFSR union-republic status in December 1991, North Osetia imposed a state of emergency and called on Moscow to send more troops to prevent further fighting. The Ingush maintained that subsequent events amounted to the 'ethnic cleansing' of Ingush inhabitants from Osetia, while the Vladikavkaz government blamed 'treacherous aggression by…extremists against North Osetia', and the conflict dragged on until 1994. Moscow, perhaps glad to see the two small countries absorbed in their private conflict, avoided pronouncing any opinion on the legality of either case.[55] By 1994 more than 30 political parties and 100 other associations existed in North Osetia, without succeeding in activating its political life, 'consolidating [its] democratic forces' or creating a real opposition to the entrenched KP Russophile bureaucrats who succeeded in hanging on to their government posts even after the 1991 KPSS coup in Moscow.[56]

The Cossacks

By this time a 'new' ethnic element was resurrecting itself in various regions of the USSR, but especially North Caucasus – the Cossacks, who had been officially wiped out twice since the revolution: first in the 1920s, then, after their reinstatement in 1936, again in 1945. So many had perished at the hands of the Soviet state that it seemed only the faintest traces of Cossackism might survive in Russian folk memory, but suddenly it became apparent that a strong awareness of belonging to the distinct community called Cossacks still persisted:

> nobody could have imagined that out of the ruins of the Soviet land there would spontaneously emerge hundreds of thousands of Cossacks of all ages, attired in the most ‘traditional’ costumes, sporting medals from tsarist times, and equipped with leather whips [*nagaykas*]…and sabres, who would offer to govern the modern state by methods worthy of Yermak's time. This phenomenon is sufficient in itself to make us reflect how susceptible Russia's culture is in all its aspects, including its economy and politics, to shifts produced by lingering outdated attitudes.[57]

Although essentially Russian in culture and ideology, the Cossacks possessed sufficient specific features to make them a ‘people’, and as with other ethnic communities their cultural revival began with the formation of clubs for the rediscovery of their own history and traditions.[58] The Don Cossacks formed their first association early in 1990, intending to create a folk museum and revive old crafts, songs, dances and horse-riding skills. This soon went much further, however: descendants of Cossacks formed organizations at all levels from village to province throughout the old Cossack territories, with the aim of recreating completely the Cossack way of life, including its militarist ideology. This tradition was essentially Russian nationalist and Orthodox, and the Cossack spirit could be idealized to the point of saintliness: ‘to make one's life a heroic feat of self-sacrifice, serving the people and God’. It also became fashionable to say that ‘the Cossack people’ carried such values in their very genes, that Cossackdom was an essential element in Russia's spiritual rebirth and so on.[59] This was not good news for the non-Russian peoples, particularly in North Caucasus.

The Cossack movement mushroomed so spontaneously that in March 1990 a congress of representatives of various Hosts was convened in Rostov-on-Don, followed in June by a 'Great Circle' (Bolshoy krug) in Moscow with delegates from the Don, Terek, Kuban, Urals and Siberia, which established a Union of Cossacks of Russia under a supreme (*nakaznoy*) ataman, A. G. Martynov, the director of an automobile factory. This initiative received some support in official quarters, since Cossacks – in addition to the revival of old Russian Orthodox traditions – offered voluntary help to local authorities in policing an increasingly anarchic society, not only in recognized Cossack regions, but even in cities such as St Petersburg and Yekaterinburg. Inevitably there were possibilities of dissension, and in July 1991 a rival Union of Cossack Hosts of Russia was founded by those less favourably inclined to the KPSS – so that the Civil War division into 'Red' and 'White' Cossacks partly re-emerged.[60]

Another problem was that the Cossacks justly considered themselves to be one of the 'punished peoples' no less than the Chechens or Karachays, but were not covered by the legislation exonerating the latter from charges of treachery. In February 1991, however, despite considerable opposition, they were included in an RSFSR decree on rehabilitation.[61] The question of Cossack national territory and self-government was more difficult, since it raised fears not only among non-Russian peoples in lands with Cossack settlements, such as North Caucasus and Kazakstan, but also among many Russians, who recalled the repressive functions performed in the state before 1917 by the Cossacks. Some seemed to justify this apprehension by demanding the recreation of a Cossack nation-state (as in 1918) or a Union of Cossack Republics of Southern Russia to challenge the

Confederation of Mountain Peoples. Opponents pointed out that granting lands to the Cossack hosts and requiring from them military service (e.g. as frontier troops) meant sanctioning a privileged hereditary caste, which was inappropriate in a state founded on the rule of law.[62] The Cossacks' military potential was certainly not ignored: it was not romantic sentiment that made the Rossiyan government issue decrees on their rehabilitation as a 'cultural-ethnic community' with territorial rights, military obligations and self-administration. The Ministry of Defence approved the formation of Cossack units in the Soviet army, and in 1993 President Yeltsin set his seal of approval on Cossack organizations.[63] The Cossacks thus received the official role of a police force, but unfortunately the readiness of Russians – not necessarily of Cossack origin: frequently ex-soldiers seeking employment, or simply violent men seeking the excitement of war – to join Cossack detachments also provided a pretext for the formation of bands of mercenaries willing to fight for dubious 'Orthodox' causes, such as the anti-Moldavian Dniester Republic or the anti-Muslim Serbian forces in Bosnia.[64]

The re-emergence of Cossacks in North Caucasus, concurrently with independence movements among the indigenous peoples who revered the memory of Shamil, raised particularly sensitive questions, since the first focus of Cossack activity was Ingushia and Chechenia as they laid claim to land on the Sunzha and Terek which the Cossacks also claimed; similar confrontations also occurred on the Kuban and in the Karachay mountains. Given the intensity of nationalism among Russians in general, there was some reason to fear the outbreak of a widespread Caucasian war like that of the nineteenth century.[65]

The Kalmyks

In the case of the Kalmyks, who combined features of a deported nation and a Cossack community, national revival was overdue, as their culture had been severely undermined by their deportation and dispersion in Siberia, and few young people had a good command of the Kalmyk language. Most Kalmyks were so bilingualized that even those who were fluent in Kalmyk used many Russian words in their speech and, although even in the 1970s quite a number of books were published in Kalmyk, they grew more used to reading and listening to radio and television in Russian. Nevertheless they respected their national culture, mostly gave their children Kalmyk names, and wanted them to learn Kalmyk. Steps to revive the native language in the Kalmyk ASSR began quite early: the republic's KP committee decreed in 1983 that native-language teaching in schools must be improved; teachers were trained for this, and 'Learn Kalmyk!' features were introduced in the media.[66] Since the repeal of the Kalmyks' banishment and the re-establishment of their ASSR in 1957, its ethnic composition had changed considerably. In 1959 only 35% of its 185,000 population were Kalmyks, greatly outnumbered by Russians at 56%, and, as the population increased to 323,000 in 1989, the proportion of Kalmyks grew to 45% in 1989, while Russians diminished to 37%. On the other hand, immigrants from Daghestan and North Caucasus increased from very few in 1959 to 9% in 1989 – the majority being Dargos, with Chechens in second place.[67]

The environmental issue causing the first public demonstrations in Kalmykia was a projected canal to carry water from the Volga to the Chogray dam at the southern end of the Manych depression, so that 'the blue threads of canals would flow all over the republic, quenching the thirst of the desert steppe, and on the banks of this inland sea there would be new settlements with orchards, vineyards and irrigated fields'.[68] The Ministry of Water Management in Moscow prosecuted this grandiose project for more than 20 years before public pressure, partly from the Kalmyk Steppe Ecological Association, forced its abandonment in 1990, when its disastrous effects on the environment were already undeniable.[69] Another area of Kalmykia destroyed by communist mismanagement was the pastoral Black Lands west of Astrakhan, traditionally used only for winter grazing but, since the unwise agricultural intensification of the 1960s, reduced to desert by overgrazing.[70]

In 1988 censorship was finally lifted on the subject of the mass deportation of the Kalmyks in 1944, and a 'Memorial' group was formed to gather information about victims of this and of the 1937 Terror, and to campaign for their rehabilitation.[71] The Kalmyk Popular Front, founded in 1989, took a nationalist line in relation to non-Kalmyk residents,[72] proposing in 1992 that citizenship should be restricted to people whose families had lived in Kalmykia before 1943. This worried some Russian residents – until they found that their interests were little threatened since the communist authorities ignored the proposal. The sovereignty of the Kalmyk ASSR was declared in September 1990, and 28 December was designated an annual day of mourning for the victims of deportation.[73] Kalmyk cultural identity was further asserted by the creation of a Union of Kalmyk Cossacks of the Don, the celebration of the 550th anniversary of the Kalmyk epic *Janhr*, the foundation of a Kalmyk Buddhist Society, and a decision to build a monastery-temple in Elista. This was part of a general Buddhist revival in the USSR, led by the Buryats in Siberia, where from 1991 onward some Kalmyks went to be trained as lamas. Help was also given by the University of Buddhist Culture, organized in 1992 by St Petersburg University thanks to the efforts of Dr A. A. Terentyev.[74] A historical milestone was the visit to Kalmykia in July 1991 of the Dalai Lama to attend the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Catherine II's decree tolerating Buddhism in Russia.[75]

None of the political developments in Kalmykia, nor its request for restitution of access corridors to the Volga, which had been taken by Astrakhan province after their deportation, were presented in an aggressive spirit, and the repeated failure to collect enough votes to elect a president of Kalmykia after the 1991 Moscow conspiracy seemed to indicate indifference or political perspicacity, as both presidential candidates – the republic's prime minister and its Supreme Soviet chairman – were forced to resign in 1992 because of corruption. Economically, this semi-desert republic, whose greatest assets were cattle, sheep, and oil and gas deposits, was poorly developed, and its standard of living was among the lowest in Rossiya. President Yeltsin recognized this during his visit to Kalmykia in 1992, and decreed special financial assistance, as well as authorizing the republic to dispose of half of its leather, wool and oil production for its own profit.[76]

Considering the political stagnation and poverty in Kalmykia (now ‘Khalmg Tangch’, ‘the Kalmyk state’) there was astonishment in 1990 when a representative of the new Soviet class of millionaire entrepreneurs burst upon the scene – the thirty-year-old Kirtsen Ülmzhinov (in Russian Ilyumzhinov) of Kalmyk Cossack origin. After a brief managerial career in a Japanese--Soviet firm, then chairmanship of the Rossiyan Chamber of Entrepreneurs, and two years of political experience as a Kalmyk parliamentary deputy, he was elected in 1993 by a large majority to be the Kalmyk Republic's president. Ülmzhinov's programme, based on fashionable capitalist ideas, was brash: a drastic reduction in state administration, extensive presidential powers for himself, and ‘dictatorship of the economy’, with the aim of turning Kalmykia into a tax-free zone and a centre of Buddhism. During the pre-election campaign he played the benefactor, giving free bread and milk to all citizens of Elista, and motor vehicles and money to the police and the Orthodox Church. Apart from Buddhism, Ülmzhinov patronized Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, and spoke of himself as one sent into the world with a mission from God. In view of the arbitrariness of Ülmzhinov's political behaviour – reducing the Kalmyk parliament to twenty-five deputies, abolishing the republic's constitution in order to integrate it completely into the Rossiyan Federation, and suppressing criticism of himself in the media – it is not surprising that the new-style Kalmyk president aroused resentment among traditional patriots and democrats.[77]

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[1] S. I. Akkiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Kabardino-Balkarskoy respublike*, Moscow, 1994, p. 5; Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. I, p. 28; vol. II, pp. 167, 298–9.

[2] Bryan, ‘Internationalism’, pp. 195–206.

[3] The Stavropol Russians’ increase of 36.9% between 1959 and 1989 was much higher than that of Russians in the USSR as a whole (27.1%).

[4] Aksentyev, 'Etnodemograficheskiye protsessy na Stavropolye', pp. 12–14; Belozerov and Turun, 'Dinamika rasseleniya', pp. 20–2; Belozerov and Turun, 'Dinamika migratsionnykh protsessov', pp. 114–16; I. V. Ladodo, 'Sostoyaniye mezhetnicheskikh otnosheniy v Rossii v otsenkakh massovogo soznaniya', in Ivannikov, ed., *Problemy mezhetnicheskikh otnosheniy*, pp. 62–3; O. S. Novikova, 'O nekotorykh osobennostyakh razvitiya etnicheskoy kultury Yuga Rossii', *Ibid*., pp. 84–6.

[5] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 15; Bryan, 'Internationalism', pp. 208–9; M. B. Broxup, 'Islam in Dagestan under Gorbachev', *Religion in Communist Lands*, 1990, vol. 18, pp. 212–25; 'Focus on *Sovetskiy Dagestan*', *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1989, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 1–3; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 11; 1990, no. 6; 1991, no. 32; 'Religion and atheism in Daghestan', *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1988, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 8–10.

[6] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [part 2], pp. 232, 234–5; Chenciner, '1990 elections', pp. 4–7; D. Mann, 'The RSFSR elections: the Congress of People's Deputies', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 15, pp. 12–13; V. Meilanov, Interview, *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 1, opp. p. 2; A. Sheehy, 'Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia', *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 46, p. 21.

[7] B. Brown, 'The Islamic Renaissance Party in Central Asia', *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 19, pp. 12–13; Broxup, 'Islam in Dagestan', p. 215; A. Mineyev, 'Zelyonye otlivy dagestanskikh kumachey', *Moskovskiye novosti*, 8 April 1990, p. 7; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 36, 47; 1991, nos. 21, 25, 26; A. Sheehy, 'Dagestani Muslims protest against cost of pilgrimage to Mecca', *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 26, pp. 26–8;

no. 28, p. 31. A kadiate is a district under the authority of a *kadi (or qadi or cadi)* -- a magistrate presiding over an Islamic court qualified to declare judgments according to *shariᶜah* (Koranic) law.

[8] A. Agayev, ‘Daghestanis: a people, a nation, or some other kind of community?’, *Sovetskiy Dagestan*, 1985, no. 3, pp. 8–14, quoted in *Central Asian Newsletter*, 1986, vol. 5, no. 5, pp. 4–5; Z. Arukhov, ‘Yazyk i kultura’, *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 1, pp. 16–17; Balammahomedov, ‘Our roots’, p. 8; Z. Z. Bammatov, ed., *Kumukcha-ruscha sözlük/Kumyksko-russkiy slovar*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 5–6; Bryan, ‘Internationalism’, pp. 210–11; Comrie, *Languages*, p. 199; A. Ya. Dagestani, ‘Yazyk i kultura’, *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 1, pp. 18–19; M. A. Gekburi, ‘Yazyk i kultura’, *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 1, pp. 13–15; Hamzatov, ‘Perestroyka and national consciousness’.

[9] Birch, ‘Border disputes’, p. 49; Ibrahimov, ‘Narody Dagestana’, pp. 115–16, 120–6. In 1989 the Daghestan diaspora was equivalent to almost one-quarter of the population of the republic: calculated from Census 1989.

[10] Dzidzoyev and Kadilayev, ‘Minnye polya perestroyki’, p. 19; Census 1989, Minneapolis, pt 2, p. 280; Moscow, pt 2, pp. 32, 43; K. P. Kalinovskaya and G. Ye. Markov, ‘Nogaytsy – problemy natsionalnykh otnosheniy i kultury’, *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1990, no. 2, pp. 15–23; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, p. 391.

[11] *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1990, vol. 9, no. 4, p. 17; A. Mirzajanzade, Interview, *Nash Dagestan*, 1992, no. 165/6, p. 4; Ormrod, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 465; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 31, p. 23.

[12] Ibrahimov, ‘Narody Dagestana’, p. 115; [Chechens of Daghestan write:] ‘Kogda zhe vostorzhestvuyet spravedlivost? Pismo iz Dagestana’, *Druzhba narodov*, 1989, no. 10, pp. 227–8; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 20; A. Sheehy, ‘Gorbachev proposes commission to examine Ingush demands’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 12, pp. 17–19.

[13] Leontyeva, ‘Avartsy ukhodyat iz Gruzii’, p. 4.

[14] Balammahomedov, ‘Our roots’; R. Batyrshin, ‘Moscow sends troops into Daghestan’, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 9 September 1992, p. 3, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 36, p. 27; Hamzatov, ‘Perestroyka and national consciousness’; M. Karpov, ‘Between Azerbaijan and Chechnya’, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 June 1992, pp. 1, 3.

[15] Akkiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, pp. 5–9; Census 1989, Moscow, pt 2, pp. 15–16.

[16] Bugay, ‘K voprosu o deportatsii’; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 47; 1991, nos. 11, 20--1, 28; USSR. Supreme Soviet, ‘Declaration on recognizing as illegal and criminal the repressive acts against peoples who were subjected to forcible resettlement, and ensuring their rights’, *Izvestiya*, 24 November 1989, p. 1, *CDSP*, 1989, vol. 41, no. 48, p. 13.

[17] Census 1989, Moscow, pt 2, pp. 42–3; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 48, 50; 1991, no. 24; Ormrod, ‘North Caucasus’, p. 461; Sheehy, ‘Justice?’, p. 19; Svechnikov and Totorkulov, ‘Politika i osnovnye tendentsii’.

[18] Dzidzoyev and Kadilayev, ‘Minnye polya perestroyki’, p. 20.

[19] Ormrod, 'North Caucasus', pp. 459–60.

[20] Urusbiyeva, 'Drama', pp. 169–71.

[21] Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. II, pp. 291, 293–6; Heller and Nekrich, *Utopiya u vlasti*, vol. II, pp. 106–8.

[22] Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. I, pp. 18–20; vol. II, pp. 175–8, 303; Ye. A. Yeliseyev, speech at the KPSS plenum on nationalities policy, *Pravda*, 21 September 1989.

[23] Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. I, pp. 18–19; vol. II, pp. 48, 175–6, 291.

[24] *Ibid*., vol. I, pp. 15, 20–2; vol. II, pp. 13–51; Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [part 2], pp. 225–6; *Izvestiya*, 1 February 1991, *CDSP*, vol. 43, no. 5, p. 23.

[25] L. P. Martemyanova, 'O natsionalno-gosudarstvennom stroitelstve v Adygeye', in Ivannikov, ed., *Problemy mezhetnicheskikh otnosheniy*, pp. 72–5; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 42, p. 35; Sheehy, 'Fact sheet on declarations of sovereignty', p. 24; A. Sheehy, 'The republics of the Russian Federation', 1992, no. 24, p. 14.

[26] Bedzhanov and Buzarov, 'Vozrozhdeniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya', pp. 245–7, 266–8; Kuyok, 'Grimasy rodnogo slova', p. 173.

[27] Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. I, pp. 19–20.

[28] B. A. Dmitriyev, ‘Etnokulturnaya situatsiya v Chernomorskoy Shapsugii letom 1988 g.’, *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, 1991, no. 6, pp. 92–7; *Narody Kavkaza*, vol. I, pp. 201–2.

[29] Dmitriyev, ‘Etnokulturnaya situatsiya’, p. 97; Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 61.

[30] Dmitriyev, ‘Etnokulturnaya situatsiya’, pp. 94–7.

[31] *Ibid*., pp. 96–7; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 September 1992, pp. 1, 3; *CDSP* 1992, vol. 44, no. 37, pp. 26–7.

[32] Dmitriyev, ‘Etnokulturnaya situatsiya’, pp. 93, 97; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 September 1992, pp. 1, 3.

[33] *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 September 1992, pp. 1, 3, *CDSP*, 1992, no. 37, pp. 26–7; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 13.

[34] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, p. 160; Bedzhanov and Buzarov, ‘Vozrozhdeniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya’, pp. 259–66; Traho, *Cherkesy*, pp. 118–22, 128–9.

[35] Sheehy, ‘Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia’, p. 21.

[36] In 1943 North Osetia's area became c. 9,200 sq.km; after 1957 it fell again to c. 8,000 sq. km: *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1953–5, vol. III, p. 186; *Sovetskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar*, 1990, p. 1197.

[37] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Severnaya Osetiya*, vol. I, p. 21; Yu. Jibladze, ‘Spotlight on Ingushetiya. The tragedy of Ingushetia: when history teaches us nothing’, *Surviving Together*, Spring 1994, p. 27; *RFE/RL*, 1989, no. 47; 1990, nos. 11--12, 14; 1991, nos. 1, 18, 36, 42--3, 48; Sheehy, ‘Gorbachev proposes commission to examine Ingush demands’, p. 18; Sheehy, ‘Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia’, p. 21.

[38] Kh. Bokov, ‘Formirovat internatsionalnye ubezhdeniya’, *Kommunist*, 1988, no. 3, p. 95.

[39] *Ibid*., pp. 89–90.

[40] Zäynullin, ‘Duday Batyr’, *Idel*, 1993, no. 2, p. 54.

[41] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 186–9; M. Rywkin, ‘The Communist Party and the Sufi *tariqat* in the Checheno-Ingush Republic’, *Central Asian Survey*, 1991, vol. 10, no. 1/2, pp. 133–6.

[42] *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*, 1990, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 5.

[43] Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 64–8.

[44] Sheehy, ‘Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia’, p. 21. See also the opinion of the chairman of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples parliamentary Committee of Nationality Concord: Ibrahimbeyli, ‘Interview’.

[45] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [part 2], p. 220; Broxup, *North Caucasus Barrier*, p. ix; Zäynullin, ‘Duday Batyr’, pp. 60–3.

[46] *Groznyy*, Moscow, 1985.

[47] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Severnaya Osetiya*, vol. I, pp. 14–15, 20–1, 23.

[48] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, p. 12.

[49] *Ibid*., pp. 12–13.

[50] The name Dzauji-kau probably meant ‘Dzawag's town’: Minorskiy, *Turks*, reprint VI, *Caucasica III*, ‘The Alan capital Magas and the Mongol campaigns’, p. 237.

[51] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Severnaya Osetiya*, vol. I, pp. 8, 14, 21, 56–9; ‘Aryan’ was perhaps justified here as equivalent to ‘Iranian’.

[52] Census 1989, Moscow, pt 2, p. 24; Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Severnaya Osetiya*, vol. I, pp. 18–19, 59.

[53] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, pp. 6–7.

[54] *Ibid*., p. 14; Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Severnaya Osetiya*, p. 14; RFE/RL, 1991, nos. 1, 41.

[55] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Severnaya Osetiya*, vol. I, pp. 22–4; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 7 July 1992, p. 3; *RFE/RL*, 1990, nos. 11, 16, 41; 1991, nos. 18, 21, 41--2, 46, 48.

[56] Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, pp. 9–11, 23–5; Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, eds., *Severnaya Osetiya*, vol. I, pp. 24–5.

[57] B. Chichlo, 'Sibérie: mode de colonisation – mode de production', in Chichlo, ed., *Sibérie II*, p. 114; Yermak, a sixteenth-century Cossack ataman, led the first Russian expedition into Siberia 'with the sole purpose of self-enrichment from the abundance of furs to be found [there]': *Ibid*., p. 99.

[58] B. Skinner, 'Identity formation in the Russian Cossack revival', *Europe--Asia Studies*, 1994, vol. 46, pp. 1018, 1019, 1024, 1026–7.

[59] *Izvestiya*, 9 March 1990, *CDSP*, vol. 42, no. 10, p. 32; G. Rezanov and T. Khoroshilova, 'Lyubo, brattsy…', *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 3 July 1990; Skinner, 'Identity formation', pp. 1018–21.

[60] Barsenkov Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [part 2], pp. 372–3; M. Kryukov, 'Ne speshi krichat' "Lyubo!"', *Pravda*, 1 September 1993, p. 4; *Moskovskiye novosti*, 'Prezidentskaya sotnya', 11 April 1993, pp. 1–3; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 28; 1991, no. 42; Rezanov and Khoroshilova, 'Lyubo, brattsy…'; Skinner, 'Identity formation', p. 1018.

[61] *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 14.

[62] 'Prezidentskaya sotnya', *Moskovskiye novosti*, p. 3; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 39.

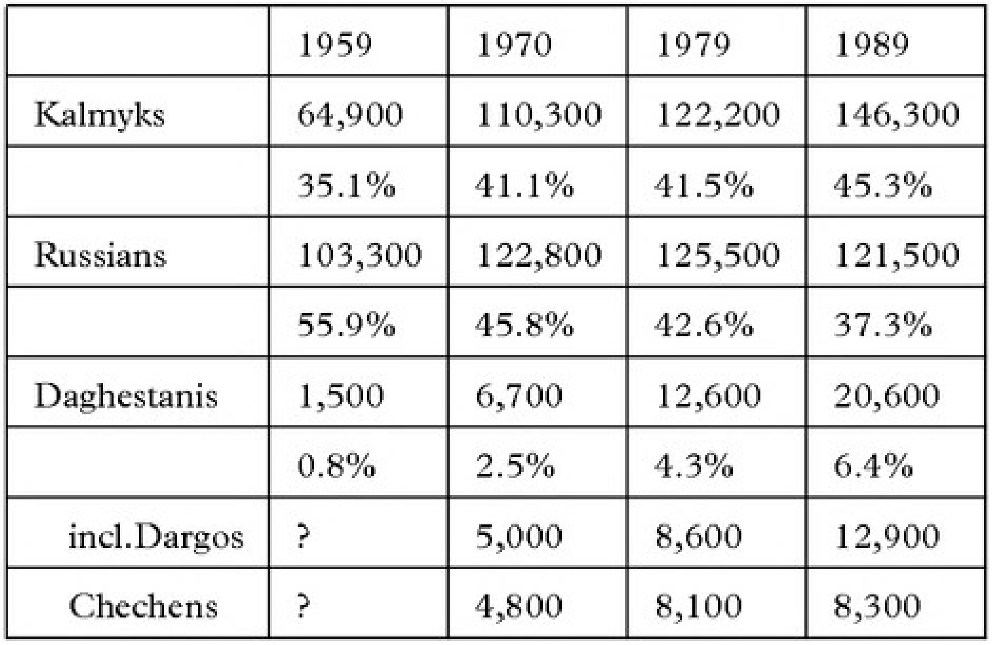
[63] The March 1993 decree was 'On the re-establishment of military structures within the North Caucasus region of the Rossiyan Federation and on state support for the Cossacks': 'Prezidentskaya sotnya', p. 2; Skinner, 'Identity formation', p. 1018.

[64] Kryukov, 'Ne speshi krichat' "Lyubo!"'; A. Lieven, 'Cossacks sign up as mercenaries in new wars of conquest', *The Times*, 28 March 1992.

[65] R. Abdulatipov, 'Ukaz obizhayet vsekh', *Moskovskiye novosti*, 11 April 1993, p. 2; L. Leontyeva, 'Bezhentsev ne budet', *Moskovskiye novosti*, 4 November 1990, p. 5; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 7, 14, 19--20.

[66] Census 1989, Moscow, pt 2, p. 17; M. Kozhevnikova, paper presented at a conference on nationality and religion in the former Soviet Union held at the Aberdeen Centre for Russian, East and Central European Studies, April 1994; A. B. Nasunov, 'Nekotorye etnokulturnye kharakteristiki gorodskikh rabochikh Kalmykii', in A. G. Mitirov, ed., *Problemy sovremennykh etnicheskikh protsessov v Kalmykii*, Elista, 1985, pp. 62–6.

[67] There were also small numbers of Ukrainians, Belorussians and Germans in Kalmykia's population:



	1959	1970	1979	1989
Kalmyks	64,900	110,300	122,200	146,300
	35.1%	41.1%	41.5%	45.3%
Russians	103,300	122,800	125,500	121,500
	55.9%	45.8%	42.6%	37.3%
Daghestanis	1,500	6,700	12,600	20,600
	0.8%	2.5%	4.3%	6.4%
incl.Dargos	?	5,000	8,600	12,900
Chechens	?	4,800	8,100	8,300

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[68] Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, pp. 329--30.

[69] *Soviet Weekly*, ‘Plug pulled on Volga[--Chogray] canal scheme’, 11 February 1989; *RFE/RL*, 1989, nos. 6, 8; V. Tolz, ‘Russia's Kalmyk republic follows its own course’, *RFE/RL*, 1993, no. 23, p. 40; ‘Two billion rubles down the drain’, *Pravda*, 29 March 1988, *CDSP*, vol. 40, no. 13, pp. 18--19.

[70] T. Sayko and I. Zonn, ‘Europe's first desert’, *Geographical*, April, 1995, pp. 24--6.

[71] *Izvestiya*, 15 November 1989, *CDSP*, 1989, no. 46, pp. 9--10; *RFE/RL*, 1988, no. 457.

[72] The forty-three nationalities registered even in the relatively inhospitable Kalmyk ASSR also included considerable numbers of North Caucasian peoples (30,525),

especially Dargans, Chechens and Avars; there were also some Kazaks and Germans. The total population was 322,579: Census 1989, Moscow, pt 2, pp. 17--18.

[73] *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 43; Tolz, ‘Russia's Kalmyk republic’, p. 40.

[74] *Nartang Byulleten*, St Petersburg, 1993, no. 2 (8), p. 15.

[75] O. Antic, ‘Revival of Buddhism in the Soviet Union’, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 39, pp. 10--12; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 11; Tolz, ‘Russia's Kalmyk republic’, pp. 40--1.

[76] *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 26, 44, 46; Tolz, ‘Russia's Kalmyk republic’, pp. 38, 41.

[77] S. Ateyev, ‘Ne vsyo to zoloto…’, *Sovetskaya Kalmykiya*, 26 February 1994, p. 2; Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [part 2], pp. 224--5; ‘Politicheskoye zayavleniye predstaviteley partiy, dvizheniy i organizatsiy Respubliki Kalmykiya-Khalmg Tangch’, *Sovetskaya Kalmykiya*, 15 March 1994; L. Yudina, ‘Prezident Kalmykii ob”yavil rozysk avtorov nashey gazety’, *Sovetskaya Kalmykiya*, 15 March 1994; Tolz, ‘Russia's Kalmyk republic’, p. 42.

21 The Caucasus enters the twenty-first century

North Caucasus after Russia's 1991 coup d’état

The reactions of government officials in the various North Caucasus republics to the 19 August 1991 Moscow coup attempt were characteristic. The leaders of the North Osetian Soviet not only expressed wholehearted support for the Moscow conspirators, but also came through unscathed to maintain the continuity of communist *apparatchik* administration. A. H. Galazov, previously both Supreme Soviet chairman and KP first secretary, became president, while S. V. Khetagurov remained as prime minister. In Kabarda-Balkaria there was more excitement, as the Lenin monument in Nalchik was pulled down, and popular pressure forced the resignation of the chairman of the government, V. M. Kokov and his deputy H. M. Karmokov. However, when the Supreme Soviet reconvened in September, they were both reinstated, and by January 1992 Kokov was president of the republic and Karmokov its prime minister. In Adygeya the authorities ignored the coup, telling the people only to obey USSR law and get on with the harvest.[1]

In the Chechen–Ingush ASSR the Moscow-appointed officials supported the August 1991 coup attempt: as the Chechen communist leader Doku Zavgayev happened to be in Moscow, his deputy lay low until the situation became clear. Jauhar Dudayev's Chechen National Congress, however, condemned the conspiracy by ‘government criminals’ in Moscow, and ‘the corrupt pro-communist clique’ in the republic and, realizing the threat presented by the Russian military, staged a revolution in Groznyy. This evoked an attack by KGB troops on the National Congress headquarters, and the Chechens were preparing to oppose a Russian advance on Groznyy when news came of the collapse of the plot.[2] Thus Dudayev's role paralleled that of Yeltsin in Moscow as the defender of reform against reactionary conspirators – in which he had the support of Daghestan and the Confederation of Mountain Peoples.[3] The confrontation between the Chechen National Congress and Zavgayev's colonial administration continued, and in October–November 1991 Moscow sent more than twenty delegations to Groznyy to persuade Dudayev to desist, declaring that Zavgayev's puppet 'Supreme Council' was the only legal organ of power and ordering the Chechen National Guard to surrender. According to Dudayev, there was 'a trail of political provocations', and Moscow press reports about Chechenia became increasingly distorted.[4] Official propaganda saying that Dudayev's 'criminal régime' was supported by only 200–300 young desperados was countered by the Chechens' general mobilization of all men in the republic and occupation of the main government building in Groznyy. In response to Moscow's refusal to recognize the National Council of the Chechen People, while massing troops in Daghestan and North Osetia for an invasion, Dudayev warned the Chechens to prepare for war. An ultimatum from Yeltsin on 19 October 1991 was disregarded and, as elections on 27 October gained Dudayev 65% support, he became the first president of Chechenia.[5]

The actions of Yeltsin's Russian government in the aftermath of the 1991 attempted coup demonstrated that, despite much talk of new beginnings and democracy, it was as little inclined as previous Russian governments to make amends for past injustices or relax its hold on colonial territories, and as ready to resort to bullying to enforce submission. The Rossiyan Supreme Soviet on its part pretended to insist on peaceful means and refused to endorse Yeltsin's declaration of a state of emergency in Chechenia. The Supreme Soviet's vice-president, Colonel A. V. Rutskoy – a rabid Russian chauvinist and enemy of ‘excessive liberalism’, who spouted clichés about‘most sacred national values being trampled’, dismissed the Chechen national movement as ‘not a revolution but banditry’.[6] Equally pompous was the Moscow government's chairman, the Russified Chechen Ruslan Khasbulatov, who even declared that small nations in the RSFSR ‘had no right to independence’.[7] Thus, even at this stage in the dissolution of the Soviet empire, Moscow produced politicians to whom Russian nationalist slogans were self-evident truths – especially that glib echo of the tsarist dogma of ‘Russia one and indivisible’: the ‘need to protect Rossiya's territorial integrity’ – in fact meaning ‘never to relinquish any of its imperial colonies’. Even the Rossiyan Prosecutor's Office ruled that any party advocating infringement of this principle – i.e. *advocating self-determination*! – would be proscribed.[8] In Moscow's reactionary press this imperious attitude was mindlessly reiterated in stock phrases such as their ‘fear’ of ‘disorder’ or ‘separatism’, and ‘the need to stabilize the situation’. While such phrases were used to justify Russian imperial rule in North Caucasus, the aspiration to autonomy itself was belittled as ‘the “independence fever” that has gripped everyone’.[9]

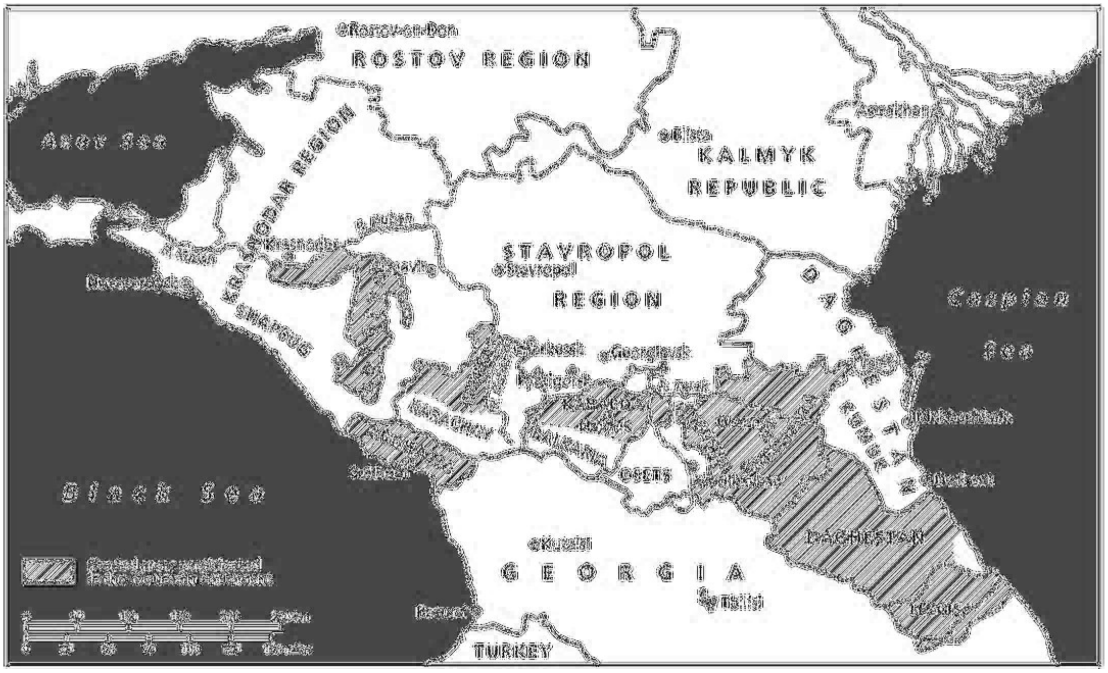
Some other North Caucasian leaders made a stand against the August conspiracy. The prime minister of the Karachay-Cherkes Republic, Vladimir Khubiyev, so far from associating himself with the conspirators, joined Yeltsin's condemnation of them and retained his post as prime minister. In Daghestan Muhammad- ᶜAli Mahomedov's Supreme Council announced that there was no basis for a state of emergency, so that they too remained in office. However, as some members of Daghestan's official establishment were attacked in 1992, their security service arrested members of the ‘Imam Shamil Popular Front’, and in ensuing disturbances the public prosecutor was taken hostage until the authorities promised to release the prisoners. Relations with Chechenia also became strained, because the Daghestani government ‘allowed’ Moscow to use its territory as a base for the invasion of Chechenia.[10]

Even Dudayev's attitude to Rossiya at this point was not antagonistic, and he did not believe that the Soviet Union was likely to break up. In the opinion of the Azerbaijani commentator who reported this, if Moscow had allowed the USSR's peoples to work freely towards political renewal, each in its own way, the federation could have remained viable.[11] However, Dudayev was overoptimistic in expecting that ‘great Russia’ would deign to negotiate with Chechenia on civilized terms:[12] any suggestion whatever of secession was anathema, and Yeltsin simply imposed on Chechenia-Ingushia a ‘Provisional Supreme Council’ – in practice the republic's old puppet Supreme Soviet – to which Dudayev, naturally, refused to submit.[13] Some account of the ‘crisis’ in Groznyy (March 1991–summer 1994) is given in an article by a former Rossiyan minister of nationalities, under the title ‘Ambition and the arrogance of power: the Chechen War’. This concludes with two unambiguous facts: ‘No fatal threat to the territorial unity of Russia existed’ as a result of the Chechen uprising, and the ‘personal arrogance’ was entirely on the side of Yeltsin, who, presumably out of the same psychological insecurity which made him incompetent to be the ruler of Rossiya, refused to meet the Chechen president.[14]

The Confederation of Mountain Peoples

Many writings about the peoples of the Caucasus published since the disintegration of the Soviet Union pay little attention to North Caucasia, presumably because its indigenous communities are relatively small and thus deemed unworthy of attention. However, events occurring in these smaller countries were no less significant for their citizens than those in the former ‘union republics’, and political activity was just as intense. The Chechens and other nations inhabiting the mountainous areas had had considerable experience of self-government and collaboration with their neighbours in the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus during 1917–19, until suppression by the communists.[15] Seventy years later there was a similar endeavour to achieve co-operation and unity among the North Caucasus peoples. On the initiative of the Abkhazians the First Congress of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus met in August 1989 in Sukhumi and set up an Assembly. The second Congress (1990) was held in Nalchik, the capital of Kabarda-Balkaria, with the Kabardan Musa Schenibe (Russified as ‘Shanibov’) as its president and the Chechen Yusuf Soslambekov as parliamentary chairman;[16] in 1991 the third Congress ratified a treaty establishing the Confederation of Mountain Peoples (CMP), and in January 1992 the North Caucasus Parliament, meeting in Makhachkala in Daghestan, vowed never again to be subjects of an empire and discussed means of settling regional conflicts by peaceful means.[17]

Meanwhile, in the face of the ever-present threat from Moscow, Dudayev and other independent-minded leaders exhorted all small nations of the former Soviet Union to maintain solidarity in their own defence. Dudayev promoted the idea of a Caucasus Independence Party, and on 3 November 1991 the third Congress of Mountain Peoples, held in Sukhumi – at that time still part of Georgia – with representatives of sixteen nationalities (see Map 29), ratified a treaty of confederative union and established a Caucasian Parliament, with Yusuf Soslambekov as chairman, and Musa Schenibe as president. The parliament voted for the independence of the peoples of North Caucasus and Abkhazia and expressed support for the Chechen revolution, and it hoped to win international support and victory through unity of the whole Caucasus region against Russian domination.[18]


Rostov-on-Don
ROSTOV REGION
Azov Sea
KRASNODAR REGION
Krasnodar
SHAPSUG
Elista
KALMYK REPUBLIC
Astrakhan
STAVROPOL REGION
Stavropol
Georgievsk
DAGHESTAN
Caspian Sea
KARACHAY
BALKARIA
OSETS
KUMUK
DAGHESTAN
Black Sea
Kutaisi
GEORGIA
Tbilisi
TURKEY

Map 29 The North Caucasus region, with shaded areas representing the homelands of the native peoples who in 1917–19 supported the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus and Daghestan in its attempt (which failed) to create an independent democratic Mountain Republic government. A similar endeavour, mooted after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, to collaborate in forming a union with approximately the same cast also proved unviable in the face of Russia's ruthless opposition.

The North Caucasus Parliament represented fifteen indigenous nations: six Circassian peoples including Abkhazia; south and north Osetians; the Ingush and Chechens; and four of Daghestan's many nationalities. However, the Turkic peoples – Karachays, Balkars and Kumuks – withheld their support, as did the Lezgis.[19] While President Schenibe asserted that the CMPNC was not in competition with the official governments of the republics, there was ambiguity about a body composed of members of various Popular Fronts and nationalist parties who had not been officially elected, and whose greater democratic representativeness commanded little validity against the ‘legal’ ex-communist institutions – although the latter (like those of Rossiya itself) were in truth neither representative nor democratic, and could not be ‘national’ as they were subservient to Moscow. In the words of one of the Confederation's leaders, Hajji-Murad Ibrahimbeyli: ‘In North Osetia, Kabarda-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkesia and Daghestan the same people are in power who were in power five to seven years ago. Only the names of the posts they hold have changed…Look in the telephone directory and you'll find the same names, including former prosecutors, heads of…the KGB, MVD…etc.’[20] Thus the Confederation of Mountain Peoples was attempting to act as a government of the mountain peoples, separate from but parallel to the existing official authorities sanctioned by Russia, and could not possess any real power or independence until the latter were ousted.[21]

In February 1992 the CMPNC developed an explicitly military aspect when – because of the extreme situation created by Georgia's chauvinist President Gamsakhurdia in Abkhazia, and honouring a debt to Abkhazia for sending volunteers to help the Chechen National Congress in October – it organized a volunteer force to assist the Abkhazians in their war of liberation, so that in July they were able to declare independence.[22] In February 1992 the CMP lent support to Dudayev's Chechenia by convening in Groznyy, where it formally rejected the Russian Federation's draft constitution, and resolved to form a confederate state stretching from the Caspian to the Black Sea. This intervention – injecting a third force, however weak, into spheres of influence arrogated by Georgia and Russia – enraged both governments, and the latter (although so obviously heir to the predatory conquests of the Russian

Empire and Bolshevik régime) condemned attempts by anti-colonial movements to proclaim new independent states (i.e. self-determination) as ‘unconstitutional’. Consequently, in March 1992 the Mountain Confederation parliament, meeting in Vladikavkaz, resolved to create a defence committee and joint armed forces for use in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts. By then the Confederation had rejected the draft of a new Russian Federation (RF) constitution, with its grudging provisions for ethnic autonomies, and declared that, if this were adopted in Moscow, the CMPNC would form an independent North Caucasian state including all native peoples between Abkhazia and Daghestan. These ambitious projects, declaring insubordination to Rossiya's government, were countered in Moscow by the creation of a mere ‘Commission for North Caucasus’ subordinate to the RF's ‘Security Council’ (which controls the secret police!) ostensibly to forestall inter-ethnic conflict in the region, but in fact to prevent secession.[23]

However, the time was not auspicious, as in May 1992 the Rossiyan government published its new Military Doctrine, or national ‘security’ policy, framed in the clichés habitually used by the Russians in belligerent political-propagandist assertions about their frontiers – in particular the obligation of its armed forces ‘to defend Rossiya's sovereignty and territorial integrity’.[24] It was, of course, assumed in Russia that this was infinitely more important than the sovereignty and territory of the emerging minor states in the Caucasus. Immediately after the appearance of this document Moscow established its Commission for the North Caucasus, and in August 1992 initiated ‘criminal proceedings’ against the CMP. The Russians’ unceremonious interference in North Caucasian affairs continued with an accusation that CMP troops in Abkhazia had committed terrorist acts and, although this was strenuously denied by the North Caucasus

Parliament, Rossiya's overweening belief in *its* 'territorial integrity' soon became the pretext for blatant interference in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Osetia and for starting a ferocious war against Chechenia.

The Mountain Confederation increased its support for Abkhazia after Shevardnadze launched Georgia's intervention there in August 1992, by sending an ultimatum to Tbilisi to withdraw its forces and by calling for united action by all North Caucasus peoples to fight for Abkhazia, as well as appealing to CIS and foreign governments and organizations to oppose Russo-Georgian aggression.[25] The only CMP members that broke its solidarity and earned its opprobrium by refusing to support Abkhazia were the Russian puppet governments of Karachay-Cherkesia and Kabarda-Balkaria.[26] The North Osetian leader Galazov also manifested his habitual subservience to Moscow by collaborating in a 'Declaration of principles for inter-ethnic relations in North Caucasus' which echoed familiar Russian phrases about 'the integrity of existing national territories'.[27] Meanwhile in Moscow a Nationalities Commission condemned both 'Georgia's aggression against Abkhazia' and the Rossiyan government's supplying weaponry to Georgia, for 'aggravating the situation' in North Caucasus.[28]

On 23 September 1992 attention switched to the Kabarda-Balkar Republic, where in the capital, Nalchik, Rossiyan police arrested Musa Schenibe, the chairman of the CMPNC, making charges of terrorism and incitement of ethnic discord and threatening criminal proceedings for infringement of the new RF Constitution. The Confederation's leaders argued justly that its existence was no more unconstitutional than that of 'the CIS or any other association of peoples having as their aim self-preservation on the basis of human rights…and social justice'.[29] Moscow's accusation, however, showed its determination at all costs to prevent secession, and anger at the participation of North Caucasian volunteers (predictably, the Russian press called them 'mercenaries') on the Abkhazian side against Georgia.

How rigidly Russia refused to countenance any self-determination of non-Russian peoples is illustrated by a highly biased account, in conventional Russian communist rhetoric, of the events of September–October 1992 in Kabarda, published by the Rossiyan Academy of Sciences Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology. This asserts that, despite the Kabardan government's measures to avert local conflicts, 'nationalist movements and organizations aiming to seize power at all costs…staged a mass political rally which destabilized political and public life'. The situation was 'normalized' thanks to Kokov and Karmokov's wise 'explanation of the nature of the existing situation', whereupon pro-government public meetings and sessions of local soviets were held, and 'practically all nationalist movements, organizations and political parties' came onto the side of the government. On 4 October 1992, realizing that 'the coup' would not succeed, the nationalist organizers cancelled their rally and the 'political situation returned to normal…ethnic problems receded into the background…[and] Some of the nationalist leaders were brought into the state structures.'[30] This bland official summary fails to mention many essential facts, including:

(1) the existence of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples;
(2) that Musa Schenibe, its chairman, was under arrest;
(3) that this was an exclusively Kabardan rally, as the Balkars had already voted to establish a separate Balkar republic;

(4) that Islam was an important factor for some members of the Kabardan National Congress; and
(5) that Rossiyan MVD troops were used against peaceful Caucasian demonstrators.

A rather different version of events emerges from local press accounts: when thousands of supporters of the Mountain Confederation attended protest demonstrations in Nalchik on 27 August 1992, the Rossiyan authorities immediately declared a state of emergency in Kabarda-Balkaria and arrested President Schenibe. He, however, escaped and on 28 September returned to address 30,000 demonstrators, including delegations from North Osetia, Chechen-Ingushia and Karachay-Circassia. Swearing to continue the fight for North Caucasian independence, the assembly demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops and the resignation of President Kokov. On 30 September the Congress of the Kabardan People, playing an intermediary role, believed the Kabarda-Balkar puppet government's assurances that roadblocks were being removed and MVD troops withdrawn, that the demonstrators’ demands for television time would be met and that trials of Kabardans who had fought in Abkhazia would cease. All this, however, was a ruse: Kokov did not resign, and the republic's Supreme Soviet accused the Kabardan Congress of acting ‘unconstitutionally’ during the crisis, while the Congress blamed the official (ex-communist) leaders of short-sightedness in refusing to hold any dialogue with the demonstrators. So far from agreeing to discontinue recruitment of volunteers for Abkhazia, the Kabardan Congress said help would continue until the complete withdrawal of Georgian troops. As a result of Moscow's intervention, the Confederation (now renamed simply the ‘Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus’, omitting the word ‘Mountain’ in the hope that this would encourage Cossacks to join) resumed its enlistment of volunteers for Abkhazia, and they continued to serve there until 1993 out of ‘Caucasian solidarity’, and perhaps also in anticipation of a general North Caucasian uprising.[31] The confusion surrounding the Georgian–Abkhazian War is illustrated by the fact that Cossacks did take part, but some, mainly from the Don, fought on the Abkhazian side, while the Kuban Cossacks assisted in ‘protecting the Rossiyan border’ against the Abkhaz (who had no intention of crossing that border!).[32]

Russian alarmist propaganda about North Caucasus

The political developments of 1991–2 were grist to the mill of ethnic Russian propaganda, which asserted that the whole Caucasus was a ‘powder-keg’ which could explode at any moment, with supposedly disastrous effects on mighty Russia's interests and security. Colonel Rutskoy prophesied that Chechenia would become another Karabagh, but did not explain who would make this prediction come true – if not the Russians themselves. ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ or ‘extremism’ was duly invoked, by Shevardnadze as well as Russian politicians, and facile phrases about its influence were frequently repeated in the Western press, although, as various Islamic clerics pointed out, there was little sign at that time of any religious fundamentalism in the North Caucasus.[33] On the other hand, a certain amount of *Christian* fundamentalism was evident. A Kuban Cossack priest, for instance, said that most Cossacks disapproved of Cossacks fighting for the Abkhaz, because ‘the Georgians, like us, are an Orthodox people, while most of the Abkhaz are Muslim…Our region has now become an outpost of Christian civilization. Unfortunately, I believe that a clash between these two worlds is inevitable.'[34] The editors of Moscow's *Izvestiya* agreed that events in North Caucasus could lead to a large-scale Russo-Caucasian war – which, it should be noted, *they* called a 'civil war', as if only one country, Russia, was concerned, and not at least three! – while the creation of an independent Mountain Republic would cut Russia off from 'the south' (presumably meaning 'Transcaucasia', and implying that this, as well as North Caucasus, was *Russia's* south) leaving Russia with a neighbour 'capable of extending a powerful Muslim influence to its territory'.[35] Similar fears were artificially stirred up in connection with the Circassian national movement, and the recognition of the Adygey Republic's sovereignty in particular. It was said that 'Russia's border has got closer to Turkey' and that Adygeya would 'end up in the arms of Turkey', which was exerting 'enormous influence' on the situation in the Caucasus. In fact, while Turkey could scarcely be expected not to take an interest in events in North Caucasus, which for 400 years was on its borders and had lain within its sphere, it was, as President Jarimov assured Yeltsin, neither possible nor desirable for the small Adygey Republic to break its many links with Russia.[36]

Another malicious propaganda story spread at this time concerned the 'Chechen mafia'. In Russia crime was rampant, with many thousands of Russians deeply involved in the criminal underground.[37] However, rumour, fed by media reports, nurtured the racist phobia that the 'blacks' (*chornye*) – that is, dark-haired people from southern republics – were peculiarly sinister and ubiquitous criminals. Georgian and Azerbaijani traders who had unofficially been supplying citrus fruits and other produce to Russian markets for decades (sometimes expressing their contempt for Russia as 'a poor country') had long been resented by envious

Russians. As conditions in Russia worsened and law and order broke down, a minority of the gangsters operating there probably were from Chechenia, North Osetia or Azerbaijan, although most were Russians.[38] Like the Jews in tsarist Russia, however, southerners in general became the scapegoat for Russia's failings. Pogroms occurred, for instance, in 1988 in Tyumen, where youths attacked Azerbaijani and Georgian workers, and subsequently in other parts of Siberia; in 1991 at Kashin, north of Moscow, where a brawl occurred between local people and seemingly prosperous Caucasians; in the Don and Kuban territories, where Cossacks forced Caucasian traders to sell their goods at a loss; in St Petersburg, where it was OMON (the successor to the KGB) security troops who victimized Azerbaijani ‘profiteers’; and in Moscow, where Russian taxi drivers, worried by the increase in organized crime in general and the murder of two colleagues in particular, staged a strike and attacked ‘Transcaucasians’.[39] The verbal abuse against them demonstrated the depths of ethnic prejudice among some Russian people, for whom Caucasians, Gypsies, Mongols, Tatars or Jews indiscriminately represented ‘Asiatics’ deserving the hatred of Russian patriots, who used the familiar racist clichés. The culmination of this wave of Russian racism was the *official* mass expulsion of Chechens, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Georgians, Tajiks and Gypsies from Moscow in October 1993 in an episode of ‘ethnic cleansing’ reminiscent of the expulsion of the Jews from Moscow in 1891.[40]

By now most of the crime in Rossiya was being blamed on the Chechens, and the power attributed by rumour to the ‘Chechen mafia’ seemed boundless.[41] From Moscow to the Pacific Ocean it supposedly controlled all crime, and people believed that it was Chechen gangs that raided trains as far afield as eastern Siberia and defrauded the Russian authorities in the Far East of billions of rubles. ‘Any crime, no matter where it is committed and by whom, is pinned on the Chechens.’[42] More analytical press reports, however, made it clear that, ‘no “plot by the blacks” exists in reality. There is, rather, a multiplicity of criminal groups…establishing their own – interethnic – lawlessness.’[43] As a commentator said later, ‘restoration of order and the disarming of gangsters should have started in Moscow, not in Groznyy’.[44] To put the ‘Chechen mafia’ rumours in perspective: the total number of Chechens in the USSR was 958,000 (734,500 of them in the Chechen-Ingush Republic), which was scarcely enough to hold to ransom the 120 *million* Russians in the Rossiyan Republic – especially as most Chechens were poor, hard-working citizens. In fact the native peoples of the whole North Caucasus region – 5.2 million at most (and far from united) – could hardly constitute a threat to Russia with its vast armoury, ubiquitous secret police and long tradition of ruthlessness in suppressing insurrection.

Russia's militarization of North Caucasus

Yeltsin and his military prop, Defence Minister P. I. Grachov, made a pretext of the exaggerated North Caucasian menace in order to reinforce Russia's own grip on the region, taking advantage of the course of the Georgian–Abkhazian war in 1992 to play an ambiguous role as covert participants *against* Georgia and overt intermediaries for a ceasefire on its behalf. In September 1992 Yeltsin assured Shevardnadze that the frontier between Rossiya and Georgia (in fact between Circassia and Abkhazia) would be blockaded, so that North Caucasian volunteers could no longer reach Abkhazia.[45]

As we have seen, by the early twentieth century complex inter-ethnic tensions had arisen in the Terek region, where for 300 years Russian Cossack infiltration from the Volga had created uneasy relations between the indigenous peoples of the Terek–Daghestan frontier. This was exacerbated by the proclamation of the RSFSR in January 1918, because the very first Soviet republics to be created were in North Caucasus – not, however, in the homelands of the indigenous Caucasian peoples, but in the territories of the Stavropol, Terek, Black Sea and Kuban Cossack Hosts, all designated as Soviet republics early in 1918. Clearly these 'republics' were intended as border guards to police the native areas, including Chechenia. Seventy years later memories of this still lingered, when the militarization of North Caucasus in 1991 involved not only the Soviet Army, but also the newly revived Cossack hosts. Friction between the surviving Cossack territories and North Caucasian peoples began after the rehabilitation of the deported peoples in 1958, because the determination of the Karachays, Balkars, Ingush and Chechens to regain possession of their former lands clashed not only with their Circassian and North Osetian neighbours, but also with local Russian ex-Cossack communities. While ethnic relations in the Karachay-Cherkes territory were relatively harmonious, their separate declarations of sovereignty in 1990 prompted Cossacks, whose settlements in the Zelenchuk–Urup district would have been divided by this, to form a separate autonomous province. The Kuban Cossacks, whose first Council of Atamans met in Krasnodar in November 1990, also began to press for a designated territory separate from the North Caucasian native republics.[46]

Relations were worst in the east, where by 1991 the resurrected Terek Cossacks, demanding the restoration of their separate district, were in conflict with the Ingush on the river Sunzha. Some Cossacks living in the Chechen-Ingush Republic requested a transfer to new territory in Stavropol province, while others proposed the creation of a 'Vaynakh–Terek Republic' combining the Chechens and Ingush with the local Russian population. A more extreme demand was put to Moscow by the Don, Kuban, Terek and Ural Hosts for the creation of an autonomous Cossack state.[47]

Meanwhile the Cossack communities sought to acquire an official state function as police patrols, and a step towards their wider use as troops by the central government was the formation in May 1992 of the Union of Cossack Hosts of 'South Russia' to balance the increasing unity among the North Caucasian indigenous peoples. Soon thereafter Moscow decreed the formation of regular Cossack regiments and the restoration of land-holding by Cossack communities; the Interior Ministry agreed with the Union of Cossack Hosts that Cossacks could be co-opted for police duty in Ingushia, and from 1992 Cossack patrols in Stavropol province were permitted to carry arms. Unsurprisingly, some Cossack groups were xenophobic and undisciplined; and in Krasnodar and Stavropol provinces they attacked Armenian refugees from South Caucasus. In December 1992 representatives of twelve Cossack armies declared ominously that their troops would be capable of guarding 'Russia's historical frontiers' and defending 'Russia one and indivisible' – especially if, as in tsarist days, they were under the direct command of the head of state, now President Yeltsin. This status was indeed partly granted by his decree of March 1993 forming Cossack border guard units subordinated to the Rossiyan army, MVD and KGB. Cossack self-esteem was boosted further when the Don Cossacks were permitted to proclaim autonomy, and the Terek and Stavropol Cossacks combined to recreate the Line Host.[48]

While encouragement of lightly armed, semi-regular Cossack troops was of some value to Yeltsin's government for local police duties, this was not the kind of force to which General Grachov intended to entrust the ‘stabilization’ (in nineteenth-century terms, ‘pacification’) of North Caucasus, or the re-establishment of Russian authority over ‘Transcaucasia’. As the ‘Commonwealth of Independent States’ was scarcely a reality, early in 1992 Yeltsin decreed the formation of a new Rossiyan Defence Ministry and a Rossiyan Army, to replace those of the USSR. By the year's end the armed forces were beginning to reassert themselves independently of the president, and their updated Military Doctrine, while abandoning Soviet rhetoric about ‘class struggle’, remained anti-Western and explicitly Russian-nationalist.[49] Although the armed forces were still in disarray through the shortfall in conscripts and low morale and mass resignation in the officer corps,[50] enough men and weaponry were available to throw into a brief, limited war, such as the destruction of the only serious centre of defiance in the North Caucasus – the Chechen Republic.[51]

The assumption that the whole Caucasus was an integral part of Rossiya and at Rossiya's disposal was again illustrated by Grachov's explanation of the Russian military's extremist thinking. If there was any danger it was ‘Islamic’ and ‘coming from the south’, and Rossiya must be ‘the primary guarantor of security in the region’ (to ‘defend’ which, if necessary, nuclear weapons should be used!). Consequently, North Caucasus at that time became Rossiya's most important Military District, which would ‘create a combat district there before December 1995’ – the date when, according to an agreement of February 1993, Rossiyan troops were finally to quit Georgia. Another step was a decree replacing the MVD's Frontier Troops District in the Caucasus as a whole with a similar command for North Caucasus, based in Stavropol, and the formation of ‘rapid reaction’ mobile units, including Cossacks.[52] All this naturally caused consternation among the Caucasian peoples, since these military plans implied ominous intentions on Moscow's part in relation to the impending vast development of the oil and gas resources in the Caucasus and neighbouring Central Asia, and its international implications.

Capitalist enterprise and Caspian petroleum

Gorbachov's catchwords *perestroyka*, ‘restructuring’, and *glasnost*, ‘making things public’, had shown that he aimed to reform the running of the state by abandoning its perennially unsuccessful adjustments to existing systems and introducing radical changes, beginning with a KPSS Special Conference which accepted such innovations as the election of officials by secret ballot, the creation of the Congress of People's Deputies and a law allowing citizens to set up informal associations. There was a widespread popular perception that voluntary citizens’ initiative groups could be useful, not only in the care of the natural environment and historic monuments, but also even in social-political affairs, such as establishing a market economy. The latter was essential, as the quality of life for most Soviet citizens was poor because of inadequate domestic production and the scarcity of consumer goods (many of which were available – at preferential prices – only to the higher echelons in the state through exclusive warehouses closed to the general public). A major obstacle to the improvement of the manufacturing and supply of goods was the centralized fixing of all prices throughout the USSR. Gorbachov recognized that nothing could be achieved by tinkering with the conventional mechanisms of the command system, and placed high hopes in private business ‘co-operatives’, mainly in the retail and service sector – restaurants, hairdressers, fruit and vegetable stalls, car repair shops, etc. – which flourished because they gave more reliable service than state-run concerns, albeit at higher prices. Even under communism private deals 'had always been necessary to keep the planned economy lubricated', and under the new conditions 'some cooperatives were former underground enterprises emerging into the light of legality but keeping their old [criminal] connections'.[53] Another writer comments: 'the Soviet Communist attempt, unprecedented in recorded history…entirely to suppress private trade, ownership and profit…[was] so totally opposed to human nature [that] it could be imposed only by mass terror, and was bound to be…undermined once that terror was lifted'.[54]

The sordid truth was that, from the highest level down, it was only because the government tacitly condoned bribery and corruption that the economy kept going at all. 'Some deals were conducted by professional criminals on the black market – and in the most notorious cases, large manufacturing enterprises were operated by gangs with the connivance of the police and the local party authorities.' At the level of consumer goods, the fact which could no longer be concealed was that 'Nearly everywhere, goods of high quality were kept off the shelves by the shop staff and sold on the side.'[55] One example of this was the food procurement and distribution system, where 'essentially the same system was at work in every food shop in every one of Russia's cities, and involved everyone from the salesgirl to senior figures in the party and state'.[56] The basic need, recognized by Gorbachov, was for privatization of the economy, but, as Yeltsin said in 1991, while politicians had been discussing private property, an unofficial, 'wild, spontaneous and often criminal' privatization was proceeding at a level far beyond that of modest service firms.[57] Once government control over industrial enterprises became decentralized, asset-stripping began on an enormous scale. A notorious case was that of V. Potanin, a highly placed bureaucrat in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, who 'set up a cooperative…[in] metals trading, using his contacts among state managers, whom he presumably helped to become rich by illegally selling the products of their mines for their own profit'. After founding his own bank, Potanin 'acquired control of the giant Norilsk nickel-cobalt plant [in northern Siberia] in a "loans for shares" deal' in 1995, and became one of Russia's richest financiers. Others included B. Berezovskiy, M. Fridman, M. Khodorkovskiy and V. Gusinskiy – top figures in the new, highly intelligent enterprise class (often called 'oligarchs') who thought big and acted swiftly, disregarding officialdom. After Putin's accession to power, some of these successful entrepreneurs were imprisoned as criminals.[58]

Long before this, the Caucasus – a region of surplus food production whose 'peoples…and family structures allowed them to develop limited commercial and criminal networks while resisting penetration by the KGB' – provided suitable conditions for the development of private initiative, which here was '[c]oncerned above all with providing foodstuffs [especially lemons and other fruit] and alcohol to the black market in Moscow and other…Russian and Ukrainian cities'. Here too, 'the growth of…[local] "mafias" was naturally and inextricably intertwined with state corruption…[and] the covert privatization of parts of the state apparatus by the officials who ran it. Other rewards and bribes were provided by the state tourism industry in the Black Sea–Caucasus region.'[59]

A new development in Russia's former colonies during the last years of the twentieth century was the booming of the oil and gas industry in the Caucasus and Central Asia, with the participation of foreign companies. As we have seen, because the USSR had fallen behind Western technology the long-established oilfield under the Caspian Sea was considered in the 1970s–80s to have become uneconomic as it was believed to be drying up. However, as an American oilman working in Britain's northern oilfield based on Aberdeen perceived in 1989, this was not because of its geology. Steven Remp predicted correctly that the potential for oil drilling in the Caspian was still much greater than was believed – and thereafter became rich as Baku's 'Mr 2%'.[60]

With independence the Azeris were able to invoke Western advanced drilling and business skills, not only to extract more oil from supposedly exhausted sources, but also to find lucrative new fields, and by 1994 the oil reserves in the Caspian Sea – now considered to amount to 200 billion barrels – were attracting the attention of the USA, Iran, Turkey and the United Kingdom, and for a time Azerbaijan was said to be 'the new Kuwayt'. Despite much euphoria in Azerbaijan and the West, however, Russia's bullying, proprietorial attitude (countered by the determination of European countries and the United States not to allow Moscow to have a monopoly of access to the developing oil- and gasfields of either the Caucasus or independent Turkmenistan and Kazakstan) delayed implementation of plans for extraction and marketing of this oil. Apart from the organization of drilling operations, getting the oil out of Baku's isolated location to markets in the world outside required a new pipeline – and this led to confrontation with Russia. One American diplomat said, 'this is…the richest oil deal since the Second World War. We are playing for the most important source of energy in the next century. We can't afford to lose it', while a British commentator believed, 'It is impossible to exaggerate the high stakes; Russia will do almost anything to get control of the oil – or at least the pipelines.'[61]

The only convenient existing pipeline, running from Groznyy across North Caucasus to Novorossiysk, had been ruined by the Russo-Chechen war, but could be repaired and connected to a new one from Baku; from Novorossiysk, however, the oil would have to be shipped over the Black Sea to Istanbul, and through the crowded Bosporus straits to the Mediterranean and beyond.[62] The first new pipeline constructed by outside contractors linked Baku with the Georgian port of Supsa, south of Poti, from which oil began flowing onto tankers for export to Ukraine in 1998.[63] However, it would be preferable to have a new pipeline to the Mediterranean, completely avoiding Rossiyan territory, so that Azerbaijan and other countries such as Kazakstan would have a guaranteed route for their oil and gas, independent of the whims of Russia's metropolis. This would run from Baku through Georgia, then south-west via Erzurum in Turkey to the Mediterranean seaport of Jeyhan (Turkish 'Ceyhan'). This demanded diplomacy and the concession to Russia of a share in sales. To construct this pipeline, a consortium of twelve international companies, led by British Petroleum, was formed in 1997 and, although Russia did hinder progress, 'put[tting] enormous pressure on… Azerbaijan by supporting its enemy Armenia and arranging coups within [Azerbaijan]',[64] pipe-laying began in 2003. Although full operation was not anticipated before 2009, everything went well, and the large-calibre Baku-Tbilisi-Jeyhan (BTC) pipeline – 'a huge engineering acheivement', 1,094 miles long – reached Jeyhan in record time in May

2005, after being taken across 1,500 rivers, mountains 3,000 metres high and seven geological fault zones.[65]

The oil boom was a blessing for its developers and a source of vast wealth for some of the post-Soviet freelance financiers whose fortunes it made, thanks to the ambiguous financial conditions arising from Gorbachov's well-intentioned reforms. In Georgia the richest of these was Badri Patarkatsishvili, who contributed a striking but controversial new edifice to Tbilisi's skyline with his ‘wedding palace’ and other buildings, and was typical in owning several homes, including one in England.[66] Azerbaijan too produced big winners (chiefly former senior communist officials) in the Caspian oil rush: ‘Conveniently located at the centre of the Transcaucasian region straddling Europe and Asia…[it became] one of the wealthiest states of the former Soviet Union…[as] its vast oil and gas reserves…enough to ensure huge revenues for the next 50 years.’[67] Within Azerbaijan this rapid expansion of trade and industry required considerable political adjustments. The pro-Turkish and somewhat Islamist president Elchibey, who had come to power after a coup by Colonel Suret Huseyn from Ganja, was obliged to relinquish the presidency and retire. Once again, the 71-year-old Heydar Aliyev resumed power in 1993, supported by numerous ex-secret-police staff on whom he could rely.

Meanwhile Baku was upgrading its facilities for visiting foreign diplomats, businessmen, oil executives and politicians, with newly built international hotels and high-security apartment blocks, as the city's existing stock of European-style hotels and restaurants left by the previous oil boom of 1885–1915, and others built in the Soviet Russian manner, were outdated.[68] Now there appeared oilmens’ pubs, and casinos catering not only for rich foreign visitors, but also for Azerbaijani plutocrats playing for stakes beyond the pockets of Western executives. As before, Azerbaijan society was noted for its corruption, personified after Heydar Aliyev's death in 2003 by his successor, his son Ilham, and daughter-in-law Mehriban, who were reminiscent of the corrupt top people in Transcaucasia in the 1960s and 1970s. One Azerbaijani politician wrote that ‘The country is in the hands of a family clan and the fact that the first lady is now to enter politics is just the latest example of the way they are seeking to privatise the state.’ In 2005 a well-known journalist, Elmar Huseynov, who criticized Mehriban's extravagant lifestyle amid Azerbaijan's widespread poverty, was assassinated.[69]

In Russia, Putin attempted to sabotage the international oil consortium's plans in various ways, including the spurious argument that the Caspian is not a sea (which would be subject to the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea), but a lake, and is therefore owned equally by all countries on its shores (including Rossiya), which should share equally in cleaning up its heavily polluted waters for the sake of the caviar-producing sturgeon. An Azerbaijani diplomat retorted that, in that case, ‘Russia might start by not sending 12 million tonnes of sewage down the Volga every year’ to the discomfort of all who lived along the southern shores of the Caspian.[70]

Post-communist Russia and its former colonies

In the early 1990s it had seemed that Russia's self-delusion of a special mission or ‘destiny’ in the world had receded into the background as the possibility of genuine democracy and social benevolence took over[71] – although even then the national obsession with historical heroes was exhibited by the grotesque 315-foot-high monument to Peter the Great, designed by the Georgian artist Zurab Tşereteli, which was erected on the Moscow river in 1997.[72] In July 1998 a more significant historical commemoration, seeming like an act of contrition, was arranged and attended by Yeltsin: the reburial in St Petersburg of the remains of the Romanov royal family, murdered in 1918 by Yekaterinburg's regional communists.[73]

Meanwhile the disintegration of the USSR had been a remarkable demonstration of resurgence and reassertion of political independence by its many constituent non-Russian countries, bringing the partial reduction of Russia's empire to the boundaries of the RSFSR, and stripping it of many of the colonies which it had seized in earlier centuries. Ukraine, the Baltic states, the Caucasus and many others had been incorporated in the Russian state with no legitimacy except the right of conquest – which conformed with Lenin's contempt for law, and with the revolutionary assertion expressed by a character in Maxim Gorkiy's play *The Petty Bourgeoisie*: ‘Rights aren't granted, rights are to be taken!’[74] Now, from 1989, the subject nations of the empire, in the spirit of self-determination, asserted *their* legitimate right to occupy and govern their own sovereign territories independently of Russia. (Only three years later, however, all thirty-one non-Russian territories[75] except Tatarstan and Chechenia, would be ‘persuaded’ to sign up to the 1992 Rossiyan Federation Treaty.)

Unlike the British, withdrawing (however reluctantly) from India in 1947 under strong pressure from indigenous politicians, the Russian government did not concede power to its non-Russian colonial republics, but grimly prohibited every movement towards their independence. The choice of the adjective ‘Rossiyan’, *rossiyskiy*, as in the old Russian Empire (‘Rossiyskaya Imperiya’), rather than *russkiy*, as in ‘the Russian people’, for the ‘new’ state (‘Rossiyskaya Federatsiya’) – emphasized the continuing dominance of the Russians over the various republics, which they still saw as their colonies. In Rossiya's Duma (parliament) in particular, this was the rooted conviction held by the deadweight ‘red–brown opposition’[76] – the communists and generals, yearning for the ‘good old days’ of the Soviet Union, who still played a conspicuous part in Russia's pseudo-democracy.

By 1991 so few of the essential elements of a sound economy had developed in place of the bureaucratic structures of the USSR that no reliable financial or legal institutions yet existed. Even more importantly, the minds of the Russian masses had not been purged of the Communist Party's stultifying ideology which had been forced upon them since 1918, to the exclusion of free thought. Some parents contrived, no doubt, to inculcate basic principles of civilized, humane behaviour, just as many grandmothers quietly persisted in having their grandchildren baptized and passing on to them precepts received from the Orthodox Church. The atmosphere of mutual suspicion, ‘brain-washing’ and callousness was among the worst aspects of the system maintained in the KPSS's police state to ensure acquiescence. Yet it was from the ranks of the ‘new’ state's ‘security organs’ that in August 1999 the erratic President Yeltsin, to Russia's general astonishment, chose the 47-year-old V. Putin to fill the post of head of the Federal Security Bureau (FSB – the former NKVD, KGB etc.). Four months later, when ill health forced Yeltsin's retirement, he simply bequeathed the supreme office to Putin, who was duly ‘elected’ president of the Rossiyan Federation in May 2000.[77]

This signalled the end of the relatively ebullient, chaotic period of freedom of speech and business initiative under Gorbachov and Yeltsin and – although all the trappings of the new commercialism and a more prosperous life flourished – a reversion to conformity and repression under the régime personified by the impassive Putin (whose dictatorial, undemocratic methods had been anticipated by Yeltsin himself during his last years of rule).[78] Putin in his occasional speeches had mainly shown himself to be nationalistically concerned with Russia's lost ‘greatness’, and the ‘need’ to reassert its prestige and international influence. His pronouncements on Russia's ‘national security’ and renewed Military Doctrine were conventionally anti-American, assuming the USA's supposed aim of world domination.[79] So far as Russia was concerned, he expressed a need to build up its armed forces and, ominously, declared that Russia was entitled to intervene with military force to ‘impose order’ and act as ‘peace-keeper’, not only within the Rossiyan Federation, but wherever a Russian minority was made to feel uncomfortable in what Putin and other nationalists chose to call ‘Russia's near abroad’ – i.e. former colonies of the empire which now enjoyed their recently regained independence and liberation from Russian rule, such as Ukraine and Georgia.

From about 2000 the inter-ethnic situation in the Caucasus reverted to confrontation and open violence. The tone was set, as before, by the Moscow government – the secretive and ruthless manipulator of the chessboard of international and inter-ethnic relations in the spirit of Russian chauvinism. Spiritually, the contemporary (but scarcely modern) Rossiyan government had nothing to offer the population except monotonous celebration of past Russian victories – particularly the Soviet Union's contribution to the Allied defeat of Nazi Germany, which was presented as if this had been an exclusively Russian achievement – and the outworn utopian (but supposedly ‘scientific’) Marxist ideology of the Soviet Union, now combined with a pious association with the nationalistic Russian Orthodox Church. In international relations Moscow's view of the world reverted to such old Soviet stereotypes as the cunning ‘West’ (or ‘capitalism’) ostensibly plotting to turn Russia into a ‘raw-materials-producing colony’. Such simple, crude myths continued to maintain power over the Russian masses of the Communist Party and its secret police.

The Ingush and Rossiya after 1991

Most political activity among the North Caucasus peoples occurred east of Vladikavkaz as the independence movements of the Ingush and Chechen peoples developed. With President Dudayev already in command in Groznyy, Chechenia was set on its course towards independence from Russian colonial rule but, despite the founding of an Islamic Rebirth Party in June 1990, there was no organized violence in the name of Islam among North Caucasus Muslims until May 2004, when Russia's official Chechen mufti, Ahmad Kadyrov, was killed and many other people wounded (including the commander of Russian forces in North Caucasus) by a presumably Chechen bomb as they watched the annual Second World War victory parade in Groznyy's sports stadium.[80]

In the 1990s the Ingush people were obliged by circumstances to concentrate on past events and the role of their neighbours, the Osetians, in the politics of north-east Caucasia. As we have seen, although the Ingush reoccupied most of their previous territory, their full reintegration in their homeland was prevented by the North Osetians, who refused to let them take over its south-western lobe, contiguous with Vladikavkaz and therefore known as ‘Suburban district’ – territory which the Ingush considered to be the cradle of their culture and history, but which the Osetians had seized during the Ingushes’ exile in Central Asia. They were declared ineligible for residential permits and banned from the pleasant villages in which many Ingush families had had their homes and from access to the city's cultural facilities. As many Ingushes resolved to ignore this and attempted to repossess their former homes, angry clashes occurred.[81] November 1990 brought the first Congress of the Chechen People and their declaration of sovereignty, in which the Ingush played no part; but events started moving for them in March 1991, when Gorbachov's government annulled the decrees of 1944 and subsequent years stipulating restrictions on the deported peoples, and the RSFSR parliament passed a law on their rehabilitation, which recognized their right to re-establish their previous official status. The Ingush interpreted these measures as sanction to repossess their former homes, including those in Suburban district. The Osetians, however, declared otherwise, and on the pretext of Ingush clashes with the Osetian squatters, on 17 April 1991 President Galasov's North Osetian parliament introduced emergency rule there and began a systematic build-up of armed forces, doubling the numbers of police and establishing OMON security units.[82] However, Ingush hopes were again aroused on 26 April 1991 when the USSR Supreme Soviet passed a Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples, followed by another law adopted by the Chechen-Ingush Supreme Soviet on 14 May proclaiming 26 April as ‘Justice Day’ – from which the Ingush abstained, to avoid losing all hope of regaining Suburban district. The Osetians, however, persisted in combatting any concession to the Ingush by demanding in the USSR Congress of Peoples' Deputies on 21 May 1991 that it should heed the North Osetian parliament's declaration that the recent Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples was unconstitutional, and when this was refused they walked out.[83] The fighting between Ingushia and North Osetia over Suburban district continued, and the Ingush, pursuing their wish for separation from Chechenia, had their separate republic recognized by Moscow in July 1992. A striking, but scarcely accidental, cause of further friction, however, was that the Rossiyan parliament's decree avoided specifying either the capital of the new Ingush republic or its borders! Still more frustrating for the Ingush was the Rossiyan parliament's later decree that for the next five years no changes would be permitted in the existing borders of any of its constituent republics.

By the autumn of 1992 about 70,000 Ingushes were believed to have settled 'illegally' in Vladikavkaz and Suburban district, and serious fighting began, with blood-feud killings on both sides, but this was 'a clearly hopeless action – a few hundred poorly armed Ingush fac[ing] many thousands of much better armed and trained troops of North and South Osetia', but showing valour comparable with that of their brother Vaynakhs, the Chechens. The Osetians, on the other hand, were a less troublesome nation with a reputation as loyal soldiers in the Second World War, so that Yeltsin and his military cronies were persuaded by the Vladikavkaz government that the Ingush planned to seize the whole city, and sent troops to help avert this improbable danger. 'Many Ingush believe that…the North Osetian leadership thus succeeded in what they had been striving to achieve for a long time – provoking the Ingush to armed clashes to create an excuse for the "legal" displacement of this "bandit nation"'.[84] On 2 November 1992, when the Ingush did attempt to take over part of Suburban district, Yeltsin decreed a one-month state of emergency in Ingushia and North Osetia, and 30,000 Rossiyan 'peace-keeping' troops from the recently established North Caucasus Military District headquarters in Stavropol were sent in to preserve the status quo favouring Osetia.[85] Russian troops 'imposed order' in Vladikavkaz and, opportunistically, a Rossiyan provisional administration for North Osetia was installed, ostensibly because Galazov's Osetian government rejected any compromise with the Ingush. It was, however, reported that 'instead of a peacekeeping action…the Russian troops…attacked Ingush villages and Ingush houses in mixed villages in an attempt to rid the disputed region of all Ingush'. Thus, far from bringing peace, they provoked the Ingush to armed clashes. The same author contrasts the general political alignments of the two sides: 'In all recent federal elections and referendums, the population of Ingushetia has voted overwhelmingly for Boris Yeltsin and reformist parties, while the people in North Ossetia have mostly voted for the communist and conservative parties.'[86]

Although Chechenia remained neutral in this conflict, when Russian troops entered Ingushia and manned the Ingush–Chechen border Dudayev declared a state of emergency and mobilized the army, warning Moscow that he would defend Chechen territory if it was infringed. At this point one of Yeltsin's senior advisers, Galina Starovoytova, stepped out of line by blaming this tense situation on the Rossiyan government and accusing its officials in North Caucasus of being blatantly anti-Chechen and pro-Osetian. Yeltsin was greatly embarrassed by the turbulence in North Caucasus, but failed to do anything other than dismiss Starovoytova, and on 9 December 1992 he took the retrograde step of reintroducing pre-publication censorship of Rossiya's media in order to control all reporting of events in the impending war.[87]

As a result, Yuriy Jibladze, the specialist in conflict resolution who has been quoted above, posed the questions: ‘would Russia have the courage to admit the truth about events in autumn 1992 in Suburban district?’ and ‘did Russia really perform “ethnic cleansing” on its territory?’ Among the evidence he adduces is the fact that in December 1993 Yeltsin decreed the return of Ingush refugees to four villages in Suburban district by March 1994 – but that this did not happen, and it seemed probable that no Ingush refugees would ever be allowed back. The reason was that the region's ‘Russian Emergency Administration’ (REA) set up by Moscow, wielded ‘practically no power’ over the North Osetian government, which defiantly pursued its own policy. Consequently, the Ingush perceived the REA as pro-Osetian, and the Ingush president, Ruslan Aushev, declared that he had no confidence in it. The North Osetian government meanwhile issued its own anti-Ingush propaganda according to which all Ingush were outlaws and ‘extremists’, who would never be admitted to Suburban district.[88]

The martyrdom of the Chechen people

In Chechenia's capital, Groznyy, President Dudayev and his colleagues were quietly defensive of its sovereignty and independence, but still wished to maintain close links with Russia and were not aiming at political separation. Dudayev declared that ‘If Russia recognizes us, it will never have a more sincere and reliable friend’, but that the Chechens refused to be Russia's subjects since, in Musa Temishev's words, ‘a commonwealth exists only among equals’.[89] Yeltsin's government, however, seeing ‘Rossiya’ as a union of inseparable *subordinate* parts (i.e. an empire), lacked the political flexibility to treat Chechenia as an equal. Nor could it abandon its fantasy that recognition of Chechenia's independence, even within a federation, would set a ‘dangerous’ precedent which would ‘cause the disintegration of Rossiya along the lines of the Soviet Union’.[90] Faced with Russia's hysterical conviction that its empire must be held together by force, Dudayev remained defiant. The crux of the conflict in Russian eyes became clear in February 1992 when Dudayev threatened to disrupt oil supplies if Moscow did not soon transfer to Chechenia overdue payments for oil. When his reasonable proposals were ignored Dudayev rejected the Federal Treaty which all other republics except Tatarstan had signed, and Chechenia adopted its own constitution as an independent secular state (explicitly *not Islamic*), despite Moscow's frequent accusations of ‘Islamic fundamentalism’. No foreign country intervened to offer Dudayev the slightest support,[91] except Azerbaijan, which under the brief presidency of Elchibey secretly agreed to facilitate Chechenia's contacts and trade with foreign countries in exchange for Chechen volunteers to fight in Highland Karabagh.[92] In March 1992 the first abortive attempt to overthrow Dudayev's government in Groznyy was made by Chechenia's puppet parliament, subservient to Moscow, and such ‘revolts’, conspiracies and assassination attempts continued to be contrived against Dudayev[93] until 1994, when Yeltsin again resorted to overt ultimatums.

The Chechens had ample historical cause to distrust Russia, and Dudayev embodied his nation's determination to stand against the threat of renewed subjugation, but his defiance was perhaps not tempered by sufficient caution in relation to such an enemy as Russia. Even Dudayev could probably not believe that a now supposedly democratic and civilized Moscow would launch its brutal war-machine against his small country but, after the siege of the Moscow parliament building in October 1993 had shown the extreme lengths to which Russia's nationalist-communist desperados and Yeltsin's military commanders were prepared to go in civil war, Moscow's readiness to launch an assault on the Chechens was not surprising.[94]

The moral indefensibility of Yeltsin's attack on the Chechens was obvious, yet even in the British press conventional pretexts were found for the Rossiyan government's actions: ‘Nations cannot tolerate armed defiance in their midst’[95] – as if the imperial Rossiyan Federation were the *Russian* nation, and as if mere ‘defiance’ of an authority as dubious as the Rossiyan ‘parliament’ were just reason for a murderous assault on the whole population of an already much abused small nation. In general support for this view, however, some Western journalists naively adopted the stock phrases employed in the Russian press for denigrating the Chechens: the inhabitants of this ‘gangster state’ were ‘quarrelsome’, ‘lawless’, ‘unruly’ and ‘turbulent’, and had a ‘fearsome, even sinister reputation’ for ‘cruelty’[96] – as if recent Russian governments had shown much progress towards establishing the rule of law in Moscow, let alone the Caucasus! The astonishing conclusion of one diatribe was not only that ‘Chechenia has no legal claim to independence…[and] even less of a moral case’[97] – ignoring the fact that Leninist-Stalinist rule had been explicitly and unashamedly anti-legal since its inception (legality having been discarded as a ‘bourgeois’ concept) and that the KPSS's tyrannical treatment of its citizens, including the Russian people, had not by any standards been legitimate. If centuries of ruthless imperial conquest, renewed subjugation by the Bolsheviks, and deportation and oppression by the Soviet régime did not give it a moral case, it is hard to see what else might. Even the Caucasian imperative of blood-vengeance, which no doubt contributed to the determination of the Chechens' liberation struggle,[98] was more respectable than the premeditated barbarism to which they were soon to be subjected in Russia's name.

In contrast with the shallow European readiness to shrug off the Russo-Chechen war as 'Russia's internal affair', the strongest support for Chechenia came from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, where the press blamed Western governments, whose 'wait-and-see policy has been proven wrong again', since it '[gave] the Kremlin's ill-conceived plans for aggression…encouragement'.[99]

As a further corrective to the wilfully blind Russophile view, Dudayev's opinion is also important: experience of Russian bullying and intrigues convinced him that 'There is no language in which it is possible to talk honestly with Russians' – which was borne out by Yeltsin's subsequent browbeating and deceit in negotiations with Chechen leaders.[100] Moreover, while some Russians remained indifferent to the persecution of the Chechens, many were deeply disturbed by it. A group of Rossiyan parliamentary deputies, for instance, warned Yeltsin of the grave responsibility he would bear for resorting to further bloodshed instead of 'peaceful democratic development'.[101] In the cold January of 1995 thousands of Russian citizens demonstrated in Moscow against the war, and public opinion polls showed that the majority of Russians thought that Chechenia's independence should be recognized.[102] One commentator wrote: 'Great Power zealots…have a fixed idea that the collapse of the Rossiyan Federation can be prevented by means of a little bloodshed…[but] All that can be built on blood and human misery is an empire, not peace.’[103] A Kazan Tatar magazine, reporting Jauhar Dudayev's sadly overconfident challenge in 1992, justified it in these terms:

> The Russian government is incapable of solving a single one of the problems that worry the peoples of Russia. Today in Moscow there's a beggar with outstretched hand in every backyard, and the government has nothing to put into it. Russia, demented by endless disasters, hungry and poverty-stricken, is being pushed into a war against the Caucasus. In the first place they aim to stifle the free Chechen republic and punish it so severely that the other peoples of the former Russian Empire will knuckle under…I call upon all sons of the Caucasus: rise and fight for freedom![104]

Moscow's motives in blatantly menacing the Chechens had little to do with the ostensible threat they posed to mighty Russia, but expressed a mixture of imperialist strategy with delusions of Russia's inherent ‘greatness’ and an unashamed propensity for bullying with overwhelming military power. The strategy focussed on Russia's old obsession with strong frontiers against Turkey and Iran and their Islamic ‘threat’, while to some extent favouring Georgia as Russia's main foothold in Transcaucasia by temporarily supporting Tbilisi against Abkhazia and South Osetia. Above all, Russia claimed not only the oilfield around Groznyy as its own, but also the Caspian field – to exploit which it was determined to maintain control over the pipeline from Baku which ran through Daghestan and Chechenia, overriding Azerbaijan's right to its own oil. In fact, the Russian government, after its heavy-handedness had pushed the union republics into asserting their independence, had no intention of relinquishing its hold on any component of the Rossiyan Federation, but would terrorize into submission any part of its dwindling empire which dared to challenge Moscow's authority.

Another aspect of Chechen life which grew out of Moscow's oppression in the 1990s was participation in Russia's black market. The Chechens were often condemned for this,[105] but their trade was not an isolated phenomenon, and could not have prospered without contact with influential circles in Russia which also owed their success in corruption to the conditions created by previous communist governments:

> All over the former Soviet Union the command economy had crumbled…and the new elite was setting the rules of the economic game…Sergei Shakhrai, the deputy prime minister…frequently complained that it was impossible to control the Chechen ‘free economic zone’. Asked how much this zone was nurtured in Moscow, Shakhrai answered unhesitatingly, ‘One hundred per cent’. This was sometimes quite overt – long after other ministries had pulled out of Chechnya, the Russian Foreign Trade Ministry kept a representative in Grozny.[106] The true nature of this relationship will probably never come to light…Chechnya was excluded from the central banking system. But the republic still remained fully accessible: its borders with the rest of Russia were never closed and Grozny airport handled flights to Baku and the Middle East. The effect was to make

> Grozny a perfect place through which to channel dirty deals…enterprising traders simply bought up a lot of goods in Chechnya and resold them outside its borders.[107]

Despite the disintegration of the USSR into independent republics, it immediately became clear that the future of the peoples of the Caucasus still depended considerably upon the behaviour of the former Russian imperial ‘centre’. In 1994 an Azerbaijani official told a British reporter in Baku: ‘Russia is here, she is everywhere…They have [their] people in the ministry, in the army. The KGB is still here.’[108]

The most destructive series of events created by the Russians in recent times was their war – or reign of terror – for ten years (1994–2004) against the Chechens in their age-old homeland in North Caucasus.[109] This occurred in a context of world events starting with Russia's war and subsequent régime change in Afghanistan (1978–1992) which provoked the militant Islamist *mujahedin* (‘holy warriors’) movement there in the 1980s, and a long civil war and desperate Russian campaign which destroyed as many Russian troops as Afghans. In Iran an anti-Western Islamic republic was established in 1979; in Mecca an intra-Muslim atrocity occurred in 1987 when Saudi-led Sunni pilgrims massacred Iranian pilgrims; and the international fanatical Islamic terrorist organizations *al-qāida* ‘Foundation, Rule, Model’ (Sunni) and *tālebān* ‘Seekers’ (Shi^{c}ah) were founded in 1988 and 1994.[110] Their anti-Western campaign, including attacks by suicide bombers on the American embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in August 1998, and on a US warship in Aden in October 2000, culminated in September 2001 in the destruction of New York's World Trade Center, causing the mass murder of thousands of innocent people.

These events had little direct connection with the Caucasus, but in Russia they evoked a hysterical attitude towards Muslims, and Chechens in particular – although the latter are mainly unpretentious, self-disciplined Muslims, devoted to Sufi orders in 'an absolute confusion between religious, clan and national loyalities', which is unusually modern in the degree to which it allows the participation of women and children in religious life.[111] The Russians' immediate accusation of Chechens as participants in the fanatical Muslim suicide-bomber movement was false, although some, including women, did adopt this practice under prolonged provocation. Nevertheless, in the words of the mufti of Kabarda-Balkaria, Shafiq Pshikhachev, officially 'the inhabitants…of the Caucasus are presented to the Russian public as predators, barbarians and uncivilized people', so that, according to a Moscow politician, 'today citizens of "Caucasian nationality" are virtually declared second-class people'.[112] A Russian nationalist newspaper provided crude confirmation of this prejudice: 'So, what are we to do with them, when really all they are good for is producing drugs and fighting? Could you name even one Chechen Nobel Prize laureate? Of course not – there's no such thing. Neither in physics nor in literature nor anything else. Still, we shouldn't blame them for this: that's just the way they're made.'[113] However, it was not only journalists that (on a basis of ignorance) subjected the Chechens to indiscriminate condemnation – nor are the Chechens the only Caucasian nation whom modern Russians choose to slander as ignorant savages and 'bandits' – just as they were defamed by nineteenth-century Russian tsars and generals as perfidious and bloodthirsty.[114]

It is unlikely that many Russians had read anything written by Chechens which would show that they are normal, intelligent human beings, but what the Chechens and Ingush write about their own culture inspires respect, as the following excerpts from a book by two Chechen scholars demonstrate:

> Many people consider one of the Vaynakhs' characteristics to be impetuosity – which cannot be denied. But perhaps it is precisely because of this that Chechens and Ingush have always admired such traits as patience, perseverance and self-control…it would be untrue to say that Chechens and Ingush are unbridled in their passions – wild characters ready to flare up and create havoc at the slightest provocation or for no reason at all – in Vaynakh society hot temper and lack of self-control have always been censured as unbecoming for a self-respecting man. Complaining about difficult circumstances, lack of endurance, self-indulgence and greed are viewed by Chechens as lack of good breeding…while being undemanding about comfort or food, being contented with little, possessing will-power, and accepting hardships…are high qualities…When a Chechen or Ingush calls somebody 'a patient man' – *sobare stag* – it is high praise.[115]

The Vaynakh etiquette of behaviour – courtesy, consideration, modesty, restraint, mutual respect, good manners and decorum – represented 'nobility', the highest models of which were formerly considered to be Kabardan princes, although the Chechens' word for it is *nokhchalla* 'Chechenishness'.[116]

'Honour' was never an empty word in Chechen society, which is based on families, clans and tribes: 'The individual could not imagine himself without his family, his ancestral clan [*teip*] and his village commune…whose prestige he must keep up. In turn his family and clan were obliged to defend any of its members…whose honour, dignity or life was threatened.’ This Caucasian moral code depends on the virtues of mutual tolerance, self-control and composure, ‘departure from which…could lead to hasty actions and unpremeditated conflict which might go beyond the individual's responsibility and become a question of the honour and dignity of the whole clan…the tragic outcome of which was quite often a blood-feud.’ A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that – considering the conditions of Vaynakh life before 1917, ‘when the Chechens and Ingush had no state of their own, the custom [of blood-vengeance] was an objective law of requital for an offence committed’ – it would be wrong simply to dismiss this stern obligation out of hand, because in fact ‘it was a factor which to some extent saved society from anarchy and arbitrary violence, by preserving a degree of social order, justice and equality’.[117]

An honest attempt to analyse the character of the Chechens is made by Anatol Lieven, who on several visits to Chechenia during the Russian war of 1994–6 met numerous Chechens, including President Jauhar Dudayev and the guerrilla leader Shamil Basayev. Those who reject Russia's wholesale dismissal of Chechens as ‘bandits’ and ‘criminals’ will appreciate Lieven's admiration of the prowess by which ‘the whole Russian army could be humiliated by tiny bands of badly armed guerrillas’. Admittedly, the Chechens’ assessment of what is criminal and what is not – especially in the context of daring raids and civilian hostage-taking – can seem ambiguous, but it must be remembered that they are a nation

> with no identification with the [Russian] state and the society in which they live, and no motivation whatsoever to conform with its laws; equipped with ancient traditions which are in contradiction to those of ‘enlightened’…and ‘progressive’ liberalism…and in a country in which a mixture of poorly institutionalised ‘democracy’, social disintegration, state weakness and state corruption have opened up the most enormous opportunities…for organized criminal activity.[118]

Lieven writes of his Chechen hosts that, ‘irritating, and sometimes terrifying’ as he often found them, ‘I never…lost the sense that to go among the Chechens is to go into a… morning, cold and stormy, but bright and somehow transcending the normal run of existence…I have come to look on the Chechen people almost as on the face of courage herself – with no necessary relation to justice or morality, but beautiful to see.’[119]

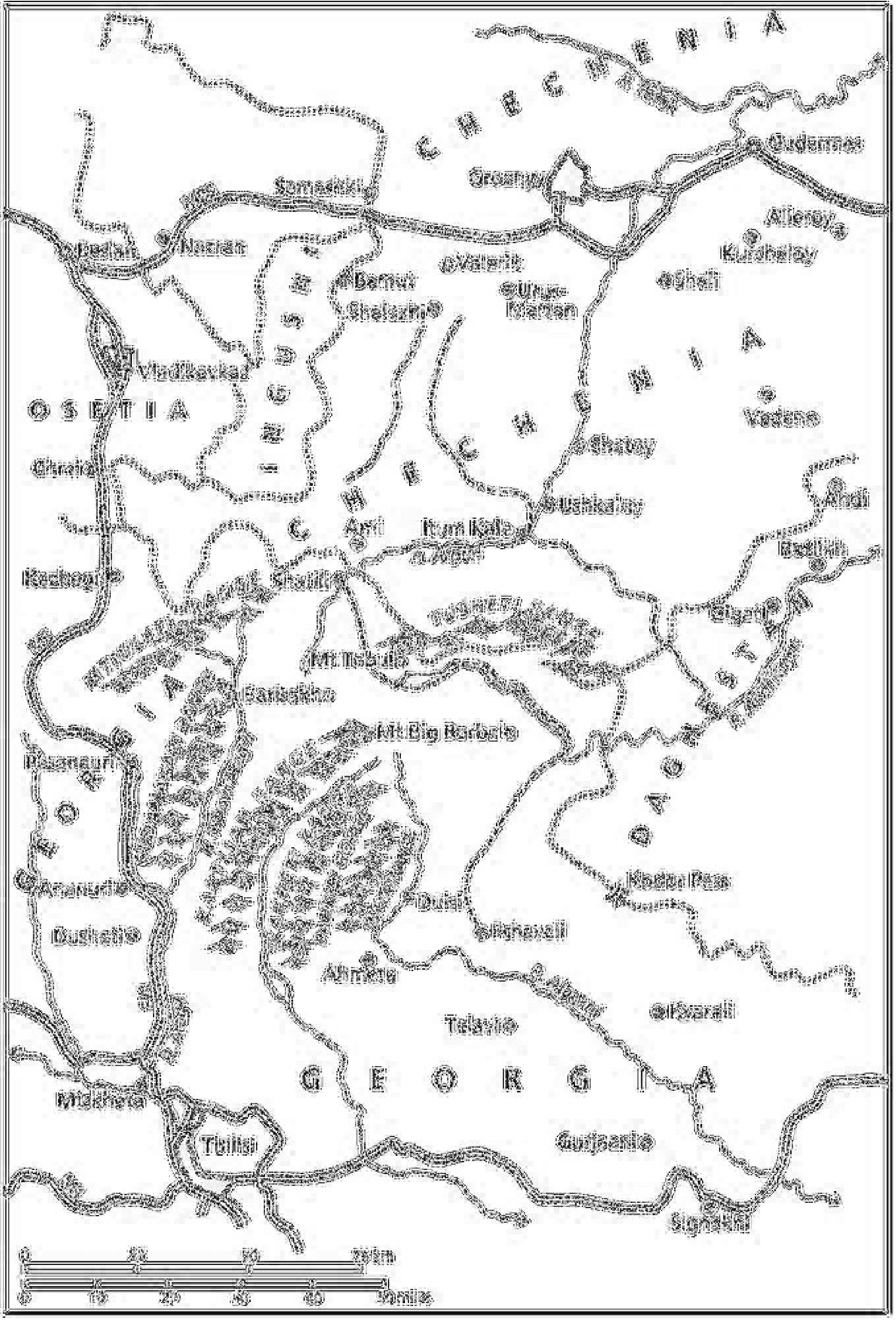
Politically, the independent Chechen Republic seems to have been something of a delusion, as President Dudayev ‘seemed much more interested in the idea of calling Chechnya independent than in the practicality of making that idea work. From the first [he] failed to create a proper government or devise an intelligent economic policy.’ A legal profession too was missing; but big deals were done – mainly in dishonestly acquired commodities such as oil and weapons.[120] However, these shortcomings did not make Chechenia significantly different from Russia itself, where few institutions functioned with reasonable efficiency, corruption was rife, the black market flourished, and citizens could have little sense of security or personal responsibility beyond the family.

Had Yeltsin accepted the fact of Dudayev's existence in 1993, and met him face to face instead of dictating terms to him remotely, there might not have been a war. However, Russian chauvinists react badly to defiance, especially from small communities. In late November 1994, after a tank assault on Groznyy that turned into a fiasco, Yeltsin, dismissing remonstrations by the president of Ingushia, Ruslan Aushev, and the Rossiyan Security Council's justice minister, Yuriy Kalmykov of Circassia, ordered a big attack on the city. On 15 December 1994 Yeltsin gave the Chechens a slight extension to the time limit when their 'illegal' forces must lay down their arms and surrender to the troops of the Rossiyan Federation – in fact an ultimatum requiring them to negotiate with the Moscow government 'without any prior conditions', i.e. to capitulate to the imperial capital.[121] This was not an option for a proud and determined people who had been so badly treated by their Russian overlords as the Chechens had been ever since 1944 (and long before) and who possessed such a strong conviction of community and right behaviour. From 1994, therefore, a large proportion of Chechens chose to fight to gain justice for themselves in their own land by driving the Russian occupiers out – thus committing themselves to more than six years of harsh conflict and suffering,[122] with two particularly savage periods of total war inflicted on them by the Russians in 1994–6 and 1999–2000. The sordid malice of the Russian state's ruthless mass murder of Chechens (and disregard for its own ill-trained and poorly officered boy conscripts) in its war against Chechenia was a far cry from its 1939 predecessor's official praise for the Chechens, quoted by a distinguished Chechen émigré, Professor Abdurrahman Avtorkhanov: 'The history of Chechenia-Ingushia is one of decades of bloody struggle by a freedom-loving nation against [Russian] colonizers.'[123]

The Russo-Chechen war was, in world terms, quite a small one, but on the Russian side it was conducted with such ruthless thoroughness against the native inhabitants of Chechenia (and any others, including Russians, who happened to get in the way) that it became 'Europe's worst bombing campaign since the Second World War', and caused even the rather spineless Council of Europe to refuse Russia membership because of its appalling human rights record.[124] Lieven's book includes interesting accounts of the views of senior Russian army officers during the first assault on Groznyy, including the redoubtable General A. Lebed, who went so far as to refuse to attack non-combatants, and in general scorned orders received by telephone from military bureaucrats in Moscow, who never sent written confirmation. In addition to the good accounts of the first Chechen war already referred to, those by Anna Politkovskaya are essential for the second war.[125]

The Chechen wars were of considerable significance for Caucasian and Russian history – on the one hand because of the cool, self-disciplined fighting of the Chechens for the liberation of their homeland, and on the other because these wars reflected the misgovernment, aggression and violence demonstrated by the current nationalistic rulers of Russia. So insensitive were the war-lords in the Kremlin to the views of the civilized world that, fortuitously, during the first Chechen war they lacked any shame in allowing observers from many countries to visit Chechenia and expose to the world media a very complete picture of the wanton brutality of Russia's soldiery, often out of their minds on drugs, in random acts of vicious cruelty and murder on individuals and whole communities of Chechenia's impoverished peasants and other citizens. Tossing hand grenades into cellars where families were sheltering was a common event. Particularly savage examples were the reduction to ruins and corpses of practically all inhabitants of the small town of Samashki in April 1995, the villages of Alkhan Yurt and Goragorsk,[126] and in 1999–2000 the hamlet of Novye Aldy on the southern outskirts of Groznyy, where the killing was done by OMON units from St Petersburg and Ryazan.[127]

At the end of September 1999 nearly 100,000 Russian troops once again closed around Groznyy for a campaign in which they did not intend to rule out any types of weapon, however inhumane.[128] This was war without a front: the Chechens were living in what was quite clearly their own country (while the Russians were simply alien invaders). The northern half of this country, forming the surroundings of Groznyy and several other towns, occupies the plain of the lower Terek – well wooded south of the river, but to the north mainly arid grass steppe (see Map 30). To the south the Caucasus foothills rise towards mountain ranges at 12,000 feet or more. Here the Chechens had many villages, including Shali, Urus Martan, Shatoy, Ushkaloy, Vedeno, Itum-Kale, Kenkhi and others – located on the Terek's eastern tributaries, in valleys leading up, sometimes through dense forest, to mountain tracks into Daghestan or Georgia.[129] Even these poor villages were not spared the savagery of Russian raids, but were destroyed.


CHECHENIA
Gudermes
Groznyy
Samashki
Aileroy
Kurchaloy
Nazran
Beslan
Valerik
Shali
Bamut
Urus-Martan
Shalazhi
Vladikavkaz
OSETIA
INGUSHETIA
CHECHENIA
Vedeno
Shatoy
Chmi
Ushkaloy
Andi
Arri
Itum Kale
Botlikh
Kazbegi
Shatili
Mt Tebulo
Barisakho
Mt Big Borbalo
Pasanauri
DAGESTAN
Kodor Pass
Ananuri
Duisi
Dusheti
Akhmeta
R. Alazani
Kvareli
Telavi
GEORGIA
Mtskheta
Tbilisi
Gurjaani
Signakhi
0 25 50 75km
0 10 20 30 40 50 miles

Map 30 Chechen and Daghestani contacts with Georgia via mountain tracks and the Pankisi gorge.

Around and within the city of Groznyy itself continuous fighting took place, with incursions by Chechen guerrillas on foot, but especially by Russians in armoured troop-carriers and tanks – all heavily armed with automatic rifles, machineguns, mortars and multiple-rocket launchers. On the Russian side many were ready to abuse or shoot anyone, irrespective of age or sex; and rape became commonplace as a threat and often a reality. 'It is important to point out that the random violence meted out by the Russian forces in Chechnya was something they seemed to find *normal*; it appeared to be only a more extreme form of the daily brutality that was part of army life in general, with its beatings, bullying and disregard for elementary safety…for every one soldier who died in combat, five more died from carelessness or other reasons.'[130] Indeed, this had long been known about Russia's army, so that only boys from the poorest families, who could not evade call-up by influence or bribery, submitted to conscription. T. de Waal, after concluding that most of the soldiers in Chechenia formed an 'under-privileged…and criminalized group', tells how he 'was witness to how men, nominally sent to "disarm bandit formations", ended up arming the Chechen fighters by selling them their weapons; how men supposedly sent to protect Chechen civilians from the Dudayev regime looted their homes and abused their inhabitants'.[131] Thus the Chechens were motivated by the same hatred of their Russian oppressors as the Circassians, who had written in the 1830s[132] that

> [Russia's] generals are treacherous and its soldiers cruel…We know Britain and France are the leading

> peoples in the world, and were already big and powerful at the time when the Russians came in a little boat craving our permission to fish in the Sea of Azov…We have no doubt that such intelligent peoples understand that we are not Russians, and although we…lack artillery, generals and strict military organization…we are nevertheless an honourable and peace-loving people, and we hate Russia because our cause is right…It is a terrible humiliation for us to learn that on maps printed in Europe our country is designated as part of Russia…Russia asserts in the West that the Circassians are her slaves and are wild robbers or else savages who cannot be civilized by kindness or restrained by the rule of law. We protest in God's name against such lies…[It is to] Britain that we turn our eyes and extend our hands, and who can help us when we suffer injustice. May her ears be deaf to the deceit of the Russians when they attempt to smother the Circassians' plea.[133]

This desperate appeal evoked little response in the nineteenth century, but is echoed in nearly all the North Caucasian countries today. Unfortunately, however, the public reactions of most Western governments to the savagery of Russia's conduct of the 1994–6 war were very muted: they maintained a discreet silence over the Chechnya crisis for fear of worsening already strained relations with Russia. 'After the Budapest summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe relations had worsened because of Russian attempts to veto NATO's expansion…During the early part of the Chechen crisis a Western diplomat said: "We still want to give Yeltsin a chance. We're not going to get into a row with him over a self-proclaimed, troublesome republic on the fringes of his country." Western leaders…reiterated that the Chechen conflict was an "internal matter" of Russia.'[134] A poignant first-hand account of the terrible conditions under which the European volunteer doctors of Médecins Sans Frontières tried to bring some help to the soldiers and civilians indiscriminately wounded in the war was written by one doctor, trying 'to focus the attention of public opinion and democratic countries on the flagrant violations of international humanitarian law in the conflict. Unfortunately, we have met with very little success…the climate of the G7 summit in Halifax showed that the general indifference to the fate of the Chechens could easily turn to concession and even connivance with the Russian leaders.'[135]

The Russian people themselves have suffered from their government's callousness in Chechenia since, apart from the 'professional' soldiers of the notorious OMON and other 'special security' forces, many of the troops sent to the war were totally untrained, and terrified, boy-conscripts. Some of these became marooned in the cellars of Groznyy. Despite the danger, some of their mothers, from distant regions of Russia, found their way to them and, with the help of Chechens, succeeded in rescuing them. Once again, despite the hideousness of conditions in the battlefield-city, the Chechens' code of honourable behaviour was demonstrated by their help to a Russian mother, Valentina Krayeva, head teacher in a school in Volgodonsk, who braved the horrors of besieged Groznyy in order to retrieve her son. She found Basayev's headquarters and was then taken to Dudayev, who arranged to release the boy. On her hazardous way through the city, running from cover to cover, she was helped by several young Chechen men who carried her son on a stretcher and ran with her back to Basayev's base. Their help to her was perhaps part of Dudayev's scheme to impress Russians with his conscientiousness, but it was much more than she received from any Russian organization.[136]

By no means all Chechens were dedicated to President Dudayev or united under his leadership. Many did not share his unswerving dedication to the creation of a Chechen state entirely free from Russian domination, but which, as others feared, might fall into the hands of those who seriously wanted to turn it into an 'Islamic state' under *sharī*^{c}*ah*. On the other hand, some Chechens would not have rejected membership of Russia's empire if they were granted serious autonomy. On the other hand, even the Russian government's obvious use of Chechenia as an experimental zone, with ruthless employment of the most lethal and indiscriminate weaponry, including savage cluster-bombs, did not break the Chechens' spirit. One of the best brief accounts of the 1995–6 war is that published by *Islamic World Report*, which not only gives a well-documented account of events, but contains a cogent explanation of its Islamic dimension, in particular the underlying role not of 'Islamic extremism', but of militant Sufism (including the *ghazi* or 'holy warrior' concept) which commands great influence among the Chechens and other North Caucasian Muslims.[137]

From the start of the war the roads leading into Groznyy ceased to provide an open approach for non-combatants, as a large number of checkpoints with barriers were set up and manned by Russian soldiers, and no one could pass without having their official documents checked. In practice, the authenticity of documents was less important than the bribe handed over to the guard. As the war continued and the Chechens would not submit, the Russian soldiers and their officers became increasingly undisciplined, and these checkpoint encounters produced ever more extortion and violence. The Russians began to treat Chechens whom they detained, especially men, with extreme sadism, not stopping short of severe multiple injury and murder.[138] Indeed, on presidential orders special concentration camps were created out of disused railway wagons, at Chervlyonnaya, then Mozdok, and Groznyy itself, and called 'filtration camps' – supposedly to identify 'Islamic terrorists', but in practice with the genocidal purpose of disabling or killing Chechen men by beating and torture, and disposing of their bodies at random dumps. Many of the Chechen women (and some men) were raped. Meanwhile Britain complained at the European Parliament that only 10 of 500 alleged human rights abuses by Russian troops in Chechnya had come to court. In the USA the newly elected President Bush 'challenged President Putin to enter immediate talks with rebel commanders…and was scornful of promises of a swift troop pullout', while Secretary of State Colin Powell rejected 'Russian claims that Chechnya is an "internal affair" in which foreign governments have no legitimate interest'.[139]

The second Chechen war, launched by the Russians in August 1999, went beyond the holocaust of 1995, with air raids and rocket and artillery bombardment of Chechenia starting on the northern frontier and advancing to the outskirts of Groznyy in late September. 'Learning lessons from the first Chechen campaign, Russian generals avoided frontal attacks and contact combat, preferring [to hide behind] air raids and artillery assaults…[in order] to minimize the loss of Russian soldiers and officers, and to inflict maximum casualties on the enemy by using the latest military tactics and equipment…[Their] excessive use of force… caused many civilian deaths, and mass migration [of some 200,000 refugees seeking]…shelter in Ingushetia…Their sufferings beggar description.'[140] The same Chechen author, striving to sit on the fence, summarizes the aftermath of the war with a feeble attempt to disguise the terms imposed by Putin as a matter for celebration: 'On 23 March 2003, for the first time in Chechnya's history, a constitutional referendum was held. The people voted on…[a] draft constitution for the [Chechen] republic and [rules for the election of its parliament and president.]' The officials reporting the election results, however, cynically resorted to the blatant distortion which had been the norm for USSR 'elections': '89.48% of the electorate…[participated], of whom 97% voted in favour'. The author quoted comments (cynically?) that these results were a big surprise for politicians and observers in Moscow and Groznyy. '"They exceeded all our expectations", as Putin commented…"The people of Chechnya have done this directly and in a most democratic manner…we have dealt with the last serious problem connected with the territorial integrity of Russia"' (!).[141] This writer's credibility is somewhat salvaged by his admission that 'not everyone shared the authorities' optimism about the result of the referendum; one newspaper noted that '[t]he real turnout was quite low and workers with the electoral commission know how to make [it] higher'.[142] The same scepticism is justified concerning Ramzan Kadyrov, the son of Ahmad-Hajji Kadyrov, the mufti of Chechenia, who had been Putin's chosen leader of the venal anti-Dudayev splinter group until he was assassinated by a bomb in Groznyy stadium in May 2004. The probable perpetrators of Kadyrov's murder are convincingly identified by Anna Politkovskaya as those whom Putin and his supporters called 'Our People' (Russian 'nashi'), including the numerous 'security' agencies.[143]

Some Western academic commentators, rather than analysing the political situation of the oppressed Chechens, have paid more attention to the Russian side in the war, especially since Putin came to power. One, for instance, despite confessing that 'Few nations have suffered as much as Chechnya has at the hands of the Russian empire and its

Soviet successor', presents a pro-Russian account of this colonial war: 'Although Russia's intervention in Chechnya in September 1999 violated [Russian General Lebed's] 1996 Khasavyurt agreement and [subsequent treaty]', the 'maintenance of some order', according to some, was 'not only Russia's right but its duty'.[144] In September 1999 a series of explosions in blocks of flats in Moscow and Volgodonsk 'created a climate of fear and anger against Chechens' – although, Chechen responsibility having been assumed, it is conceded that this 'remains a controversial question'. It might be more accurate to say: 'was dubious at the very least!', considering that a supposed attempt to blow up a block of flats in Ryazan on 22 September was at first said to have been 'foiled by the FSB' then two days later was unconvincingly explained away by the director of the FSB as merely a 'training exercise'. This affair became increasingly murky and perilous, as the first source cited here makes clear.[145] The pattern of justification of Moscow's victimization of the Chechens was set by Putin in various chauvinistic addresses to the Russian people: 'Today we are living in…the aftermath of the break-up of a vast great state. But…despite all the difficulties we have managed to preserve the core of the colossus which was the Soviet Union.' (Presumably 'we' here implies 'we true Russian patriots', '*our* people'.) The writer continues: Putin 'feared that the very existence of Russia was at stake, and that the country could be engulfed in endless…conflicts' and (despite admitting that Russia's disintegration is improbable) continues to quote Putin:

> The issue is not secession…Chechnya will not stop with its own independence. It will be used as a staging ground for a further attack on Russia…The purpose will be to grab more territory. They would overwhelm Dagestan. Then the whole Caucasus – Dagestan,

> Ingushetiya, and then up along the Volga – Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, and farther into the depths of the country [presumably central Russia]…When I started to compare the scale of the possible tragedy with what we have there now, I had no doubt that we should act as we are acting – maybe even more firmly.[146]

Putin's self-justifying and scare-mongering words, with their paranoid suggestion of innumerable Chechen hordes, are absurd, considering the total number of Chechens (scarcely the Mongols!).[147] This was sheer nationalist propaganda addressed to the ignorant and impressionable. Nevertheless the same commentator not only accepts Putin's apologia for Russian misconduct, but adds an even more apocalyptic scenario in which the blame is once again shifted off the the real culprit – Russia – on to the Chechens themselves:

> While all national communities may aspire to autonomy, unless these aspirations are subordinated to a negotiated process they threaten to reduce world politics to a state of permanent war. For much of the Chechen leadership after 1991 independence was non-negotiable…Russia's attempts to find a mechanism to integrate the divergent demands of its republics…were rebuffed by the Chechen leadership.[148]

This is a strange argument since – although in 1991 Yeltsin's government did grant somewhat greater autonomy not only to the former ASSRs, but even to autonomous provinces – independence or secession by former union republics remained absolutely ‘non-negotiable’ for the Moscow government, and no ‘attempts’ to allow compromise on treaties with union republics were apparent.

Even Lenin was more accommodating in acknowledging the rights of nations to their nominal republics within the USSR. In 1923 he also condemned the contemptuous attitude characteristic of Russian officials towards the non-Russian subjects of the empire – which still prevailed 70 years later. He drew a contrast between ‘small-nation nationalism’ and big-nation chauvinism, insisting that ‘It is essential to distinguish between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and the nationalism of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and the nationalism of a small nation’, in order to ‘defend the Rossiyan native peoples from the advent of that truly Russian man, the Great-Russian chauvinist – essentially a scoundrel and a bully – the typical Russian bureaucrat’.[149] Lenin's negative opinion of Russian bureaucracy was not widely publicized during the communist period, but was and remains totally appropriate for the relations between the Rossiyan Federation and its constituent non-Russian nations in the twenty-first century.

The supposed unity and harmony prevailing among the USSR's many ethnic communities were also proclaimed in the national anthem: ‘An indestructable union of free republics / Was constructed for ever by Great Rus. / Long live the united and mighty Soviet Union / Created by the will of its peoples!’ In 1987–91 the falsity of these sentiments had been clearly demonstrated in the rush by practically all the non-Russian territories to assert their sovereignty and independence as separate states. Despite 80 years of supposed ‘equality and fraternity’ the state was still dominated by the imperial arrogance of its Russian leaders, which was so brutally asserted in the anti-Chechen wars and their monument – the ruthlessly demolished city of Groznyy. In March 2000

Vladimir Putin became the embodiment of the new imperialism, expressed by his single principle of Russia's ‘territorial integrity’.[150]

Meanwhile the martyrdom of Groznyy and the Chechen people had been renewed in August 1999, and at the beginning of 2001 Putin made the ‘Federal Security Bureau’ (FSB – the former KGB) responsible for the conduct of Russia's operations in Chechenia, ‘instituting a form of terror that was muted and insidious; an arrangement for slow extermination that was stealthy and silent’. This employed unmarked FSB vehicles to pick up Chechen men in and around Groznyy during the hours of darkness and take them to ‘filtration camps’, where they were ruthlessly abused, tortured, humiliated and often killed. The Russian thugs who did this already enjoyed impunity, ‘but from now on there would be protective anonymity, [with] no possibility of liability to blame’. Meanwhile Putin could present himself to Western governments as an ally in the fight against ‘terrorism’. For Chechens, however, ‘their feeling of total isolation’ was increased as they found themselves branded as a terrorist nation, guilty in the eyes of humanity.[151]

Putin's hypocritical, or ignorant, refrain about his war against ‘separatism’, ‘extremism’ and ‘Islamic terror’ is matched by the sentiments expressed to a journalist by the Russian general who was in command of the destruction of Groznyy and other atrocities: ‘I want Europe to know why we are doing this…We are doing it to prevent extremism spreading throughout the continent. We are doing this so there will always be peace. Why don't you people [journalists] bother to explain that?’[152]

People of Putin's kind chose to see the recent partial disintegration of Russia's former empire, the USSR, as a ‘humiliation’, which could be redeemed only by Russia's regaining ‘great-power’ status, i.e. the ability to dictate to subjugated colonies and inspire fear in other states. This view went back to the nineteenth century and the dictum of Emperor Nicholas I: ‘Where once the Russian flag has been raised it must never be lowered.’[153] The same attitude had been expressed in an early twentieth-century semi-official survey of tsarist Russia's Asian colonies: ‘The lands of Asiatic Russia are an integral and inalienable part of our state… Acquaintance with them and with the glorious story of their acquisition is an unfailing source of a proud and joyful awareness of Russia's greatness.’[154] In Putin's Russia a thuggish conviction of Russia's ‘greatness’ motivated ‘Our People’ – the active propagandists of the president's policies on the streets.

It was dangerous to criticize ‘Our People’ or Putin himself, as the journalist Anna Politkovskaya and her associates in the Memorial society, including the Chechen history teacher, Natalya Estemirova, and Stanislav Markelov, a human-rights lawyer, did fearlessly, detailing many cases of illegal arrests, beatings and torture, and closed trials that were a mockery of justice.[155] Politkovskaya had written for several Russian newspapers about the second Russo-Chechen war, and in particular the Russian Mothers and other female victims of the Russian military and security services, including the rapist-murderer Colonel Budanov. She herself was silenced on 7 October 2006 by being shot on her own doorstep – her death warrant no doubt having been various slighting references to Putin, including her comparison of him with the government clerk devoid of personality depicted in Nikolay Gogol's story ‘The Overcoat’.[156] Some of Politkovskaya's most telling reports were written in Ingushia. She believed that some of the perpetrators of the Beslan school disaster were Ingush, but also that the North Osetian president, A. Dzasokhov, should have borne full responsibility for the deaths of the children and 'should have been put on trial. Putin, however, does not put his allies on trial.'[157]

The Second Chechen War, begun by Putin in August 1999, differed from the First in some respects – in the first place, because the news media were muzzled, preventing first-hand reporting of events and conditions, so that the Russian and international public would believe that this was an 'anti-terrorist operation', in which 'only mopping-up work remains to be done'. 'To report from the Chechen side was to support the enemy. The local media largely complied, glossing over reports of civilian massacres and Chechen resistance.' There were up to 300,000 refugees: 'While most went to Ingushetia, some went south – on foot across the mountains to Georgia. In October 1999 in Duisi, a village at the mouth of the Pankisi Gorge across the border in Georgia, I found hundreds of Chechen refugees crowded in an abandoned hospital', who had reached this uncomfortable haven by trudging across high mountain tracks deep in snow, pursued even here by the malice of the Russians, who not only had mined some of the routes, but sent aircraft to bomb the escaping Chechens, many of whom were women and children.[158] The writer quoted here allows a Chechen to sum up the situation – Hasan, a village elder from Samashki, who spoke of a new level of brutality: 'I never imagined war could be worse than what we saw before. But this is not war. It is murder on a state level; it is mass murder.'

The withdrawal of the last defenders of besieged Groznyy at the end of January 2000 illustrated the same Russian savagery. As they moved out to the south-west by night they had to cross fields where mines had been laid so densely that they could not be avoided, and many Chechen soldiers were killed or maimed; the survivors being then subjected to intense aerial bombing at every village they passed through.[159]

The Russians’ nearly total destruction of the Chechens was a fitting culmination of their two-century-long persecution of this, one of the most clearly autochthonous peoples of the Caucasus. This had long been desired by some of the most chauvinistic members of Russia's imperial establishment, such as the nineteenth-century historian, novelist and specialist on the Caucasus, Platon Zubov, who in his survey of North Caucasus ‘makes detailed recommendations concerning the best method of pacifying the Caucasus’, which ‘were taken into account not so much by the tsarist administration, but…by its Soviet successors’. In contrast with Transcaucasia, which was a real ‘Eldorado’, happy despite its ‘excessively lazy’ and ‘intellectually limited’ population, the mountain peoples, who constantly threatened Georgia but were themselves ‘practically unconquerable in their inaccessible mountain refuges’, were ‘savages’ (in Russian *dikari*). As some of them were ‘too wild, too fanatical and averse to any form of civilization’ they ‘had to be moved to the provinces of inner Russia and replaced by Russian settlers’. In particular, the Chechen people, according to Zubov, ‘is remarkable for its love of plunder, robbery and murder, for its spirit of deceit, its courage, recklessness, resolution, cruelty, fearlessness, its uncontrollable insolence and its unlimited arrogance’ (that is – they dared to stand up to Russian arrogance!). ‘The only way to get rid of this ill-intentioned people is to destroy it utterly.’ The author of this account says that ‘Zubov's suggestions were certainly taken into consideration’, especially at the time of Russia's ruthless campaign against Shamil's followers.[160] It is equally certain that something like this ‘final solution’ (on a smaller numerical scale than Nazi Germany's destruction of the Jews, but no less vicious in its inhumane intention, its demented propaganda and its savage accomplishment) was attempted by the Rossiyan Federation in 1991–2005.

Armenia: culture, war and politics, 1991–2008

Despite the tribulations caused by Russia's communist régime, the Armenians under their enforced ‘modernization’, in contrast with their life under the tsars, had become ‘more urbanized, more industrial…more literate, more mobile, and Armenian women were considerably freer than they had been’.[161] Whereas in the 1920s more than 80% of Armenians were peasants, 60 years later only 20% were rural, and ‘the great majority of Armenians in Armenia lived in cities and towns’. The towns themselves, which had formerly

> resembled Persian or Turkish provincial towns, now had a modern, Western look about them. Nearly three-quarters of the Armenian population…in 1980 had secondary or higher education…Women…now constituted 46% of the workers and employees in the republic. Well over two-thirds of the doctors and more than half of the teachers…were women. The patriarchal attitudes of traditional Armenian men were constantly being challenged, though they were far from being overcome.[162]

Leaving aside all the coercion and terror, the Bolshevik revolution had

> forged a new society much like that in developed Western countries…More possibilities existed in life for Armenians than ever before…After seventy years of Soviet power, more Armenians spoke, read, wrote, argued and invented in Armenian than ever before. From the ‘starving Armenians’ of half a century ago…a new nation had been formed, and with that nation had come a new consciousness and sense of national interest.

Despite the clash between these aspirations of the newly revived Armenian nation and the rigid ideological conformism of the Soviet Russian state,

> Social and economic modernization and renationalization produced a vital, educated people whose expectations about how they wished to live and be governed in the future increasingly clashed with the restrictions imposed by an undemocratic regime… Its fate in the twentieth century seemed inexorably… tied to the Soviet empire.[163]

Although the Armenian scholar quoted above goes on to chronicle the Armenians’ actions contributing to the USSR's fall and their steps towards constructing a new national democracy, there was an unfortunate contrast between Armenia's respectable reputation for its level of education, technology and general culture on the one hand, and the less impressive level of its political development on the other. In 1996 a correspondent described a recent visit to Yerevan:

> The bathroom tap yields a trickle of water. The lights come on after dark. The currency holds its value. The

> streets are calm and safe. In Armenia such things feel like the stuff of miracles. For eyes are dark still with the memory of one torment after another that reduced Armenia to poverty and despair: the 8-year war with Azerbaijan over [Mountain Karabagh]…begun in 1986 and stalled in a ceasefire since May 1994…the terrible earthquake of December 1988, the economic collapse after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991…Mere survival has been an achievement. Small wonder if, enjoying a rare interlude of relative normality, Armenians feel disinclined to take new risks. A presidential election due on September 22nd [1996] seems likely to be won by the incumbent, Levon Ter-Petrossian, an autocratic intellectual who led Armenia to independence five years ago and has kept the country on a tight rein since.[164]

Indeed Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan was returned in 1996 by a dubious election in the first round, after which he sent tanks on to the streets of Yerevan, having won five more years as president, albeit with his name tarnished.[165]

Yet another serious problem was that during 1991–6 Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan had presided over what an American commentator called ‘the emptying of Armenia’, with ‘War and poverty…remorselessly driving Armenians out of Armenia.’ Some 700,000 Armenians (18% of the population – the majority male graduates of the technocratic intelligentsia, but also refugees from Mountain Karabagh) left the country, reducing its population to less than 3 million, and this had brought the economy to a virtual standstill. There was need for ‘Timely policies…to discourage emigration and encourage the return of those who left reluctantly’, but it seemed improbable that

Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan's government was capable of motivating such a movement, given the prevailing anti-democratic political climate in Armenia: ‘those capable of forging a legislative renewal of Armenia…[being] either abroad in exile, in prison, or pushed to the sidelines’.[166] A symptom of this paralysis was that in November 1997 the president ‘in his first press conference in five years, confessed…that he thought the status quo [in Karabagh] was unsustainable and was hurting Armenia’ – to which the opposition's immediate reaction was to condemn him as a traitor for expressing doubts.[167] Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan's ‘tactical mistake’ was that

> He dared to suggest that Armenia should be more flexible over Karabakh, and blessed a…peace plan put forward by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Armenian troops…would withdraw from other occupied bits of Azerbaijan to the east of Karabakh before talks started…Such a concession, hoped Mr Ter-Petrossian, would help end Armenia's economic isolation: Turkey and Azerbaijan [having] closed their borders with Armenia, while the sole railway to…Russia…[was] blocked by…[the] ethnic dispute between Georgia and Abkhazia. Local Armenian leaders in Karabakh and many Armenians elsewhere were outraged by what they viewed as…Ter-Petrossian's treachery.[168]

Such disagreement over Mountain Karabagh was not new, but had existed ever since Armenia became independent (and Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan first became president) in 1991.[169] Now, in the run-off election held in February 1998, he was challenged by his prime minister, Robert Kocharyan – a native of, and active combatant for, Mountain Karabagh. As this was still officially part of Azerbaijan, Kocharyan was an

Azerbaijanian citizen, but (although he claimed, jocularly, to be *Albanatsi* – an ancient Albanian)[170] Kocharyan wanted to be a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, which motivated his bid for the presidency in the elections in March–April 1998.

A journalist commented that, 'The downfall of…Levon Ter-Petrossian was swift, dramatic and bloodless, but it leaves a big gap in what was arguably…the steadiest country in the Caucasus.'[171] Kocharyan was 43 when he took over as president, after considerable experience in building up the Armenian armed forces and fighting to win back Karabagh for Armenia – but the country desperately needed peace. It would not get this if he failed to end Armenia's regional isolation: 'Two of Armenia's borders and three of its main rail links abroad are closed. The entire Caucasus would become safer – and richer – if the Karabagh question were peacefully settled.'[172] Apparently Kocharyan had already begun this process, and 'established himself as a competent administrator and eager reformer' – qualities badly needed to develop Armenia's economy, which suffered 'not only from post-Soviet turmoil but also the impact of the ten-year economic blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey'. Nevertheless, the vote count evoked some doubts: Kocharyan had won over 60% of the poll, and his challenger, Armenia's former KPSS first secretary, Karen Demirchyan, almost 40%, but some thought that 'Had the election been cleaner…Demirchyan might have done even better…[since] many Armenians are nostalgic for the certainties of the Soviet past.'[173] Eighteen months later, on 27 October 1999, the potential violence of Armenian politics was demonstrated by a terrorist attack when men firing machineguns stormed the parliament building and killed the prime minister, Vazgen Sarkisyan, the speaker, Karen Demirchyan, and two others. President Kocharyan himself was absent at the time and no other members of the government were targeted. The unidentified assassins escaped, but an Azerbaijani politician considered that they represented ‘(outside) forces…working against peace in the region’ – a euphemism alluding to Russia and its suspected attempts to destabilize the Caucasus and prevent a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[174]

In the next presidential elections, on 19 February 2003, Kocharyan's main opponent was Stepan Demirchyan, the son of Karen. As Kocharyan won 49.5% of the votes, short of the 50% required for a first-round victory, a second round was held, in which Demirchyan increased his score from 28.2% to 32.5%, but Kocharyan received 67.5% and won. While the Armenian government's Central Election Commission said that voting had been ‘calm and transparent’, ‘observers from the Council of Europe and the…OSCE found that the conduct of the election fell short of international standards’, while a US government spokesman said that the Armenian leadership ‘had missed an important opportunity to advance democratisation by holding a credible election’. No better was the parliamentary election on 25 May 2003, in which the party supported most by Kocharyan won thirty-one seats, and its three principal competitors between eleven and nineteen. The new ‘Justice’ party demanded that the results be declared invalid because of ‘large-scale falsification and infringements of electoral law’.[175]

When the parliamentary elections came round in May 2007 *The Times* prefaced its report with the declaration that ‘Ballot-stuffing and vote-rigging have discredited past elections. This time Armenia knows it must get it right’, and the country's well-wishers abroad offered both financial inducements ($235 million from the USA) and threats (exclusion from the European Union's ‘Neighbourhood Policy’) to encourage probity. ‘And yet opposition parties say that the corruption in these elections, although more subtle than before, has been just as pervasive.’ These elections were also a test for the prime minister, Serzh Sarkisyan (or Sargsyan), who was seen as a powerful figure because of his career in the secret services and armed forces, and who already aimed to succeed Kocharyan as president. He had declared that these elections would be ‘the best in the history of independent Armenia’, but again it transpired that various abuses occurred, with television programmes biased in favour of official candidates, and teachers and other public servants being threatened with dismissal if they did not vote for the ruling party.[176] It was no surprise, therefore, that the February 2008 presidential elections ‘ran true to form…The incumbent wins; the opposition cries foul; it takes to the streets.’ Serzh Sarkisyan won 53% of votes, while his rival, the former president Levon Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan, got only 21%. Then Sarkisyan was accused of ballot-stuffing and intimidation, and the OSCE observers, who had at first ‘opined that the election was “mostly in line with the country's international commitments”’, later issued a report acknowledging electoral abuses. The mass protests which then occurred centred on Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan, who demanded a rerun of the election. Demonstrations remained peaceful until, eleven days later, on the pretext that some protesters were armed, the Kocharyan–Sarkisyan government sent in the police who dispersed the crowd and put Ṭer-P̣eṭrosyan under house arrest. When the protesters reassembled, troops appeared and opened fire, killing eight people and exciting mob violence, including looting and setting fire to cars.[177]

By 1997 Karabagh appeared to be fully united with the Republic of Armenia, sharing the same currency, and with their roads joined up into one system. ‘As elsewhere in Armenia, Karabagh now has round-the-clock electricity and shops full of goods, mostly from Iran.’ However, it was still not simply another Armenian province, as its traditionally tough inhabitants, speaking a different dialect, had their own political institutions (including the Dashnak party, which was banned in Armenia) and their own army: ‘The Karabakhis will not easily be pushed around by the cousins from Yerevan.’[178] The same commentator explains that the Karabagh leader, Arkadi Gukasyan, looked upon the Aghdam district east of central Karabagh, recently taken from Azerbaijan, ‘as a valuable bargaining chip against the day when’, in exchange for Armenian acceptance that Karabagh is *de jure* part of Azerbaijan, it might be granted it the special status of a fully autonomous Armenian enclave.[179]

So far as Armenia's lasting independence was concerned, its most important asset would be a thriving economy. In 2008 ‘though economic growth has been fuelled by a building boom and dollops of aid from America and the Armenian diaspora, much of the recent wealth is concentrated in the hands of oligarchs. Russia has a huge stake in the economy’, and in general ‘Russia is very conspicuous, and Russian troops patrol some of its borders.’ For instance, it was reported in 1996 that ‘the key to Armenia's security remains Russia, which keeps 12,000 troops on Armenian soil, helps guard its borders, and keeps a wary eye on its neighbours’. In other words, Armenia – and other indigenous countries in the Caucasus – despite ardent words about ‘national independence’, was seen by Moscow as a periphery where the Kremlin was able to act (or Armenia was unable to prevent it from acting) as if Armenia was still a Russian colony.[180] Sometimes, indeed, this assumption was helpful to Armenia, as in 2003, when Russia took over management of the Metsamor nuclear power station, which had been out of commission since the 1988 earthquake, in exchange for a debt equivalent to $40 million owed to Moscow by Armenia for electricity. (On the other hand, it was the United States that in 2007 offered backing to Armenia for a new nuclear power station in place of its hazardous Chernobyl-generation model, which may be completed by 2017.)[181]

Turkey's border with Armenia had been closed since the 1990s, in the first place to assert Turkey's support for independent Azerbaijan, and then in reaction against Armenia's insistence on Turkey's admitting the crime of genocide against the Armenian people in 1915 – in further commemoration of which a Genocide Museum was opened in Yerevan in 1995 near the existing memorial. Among the museum's exhibits are telling quotations from explicit orders of 1915–16 sent by Talaat Pasha to Turkish provisional governors about strict performance of the extermination of Armenians – men, women and children – the matter-of-fact tone of which recalls Hitler's Jewish Holocaust.[182] The virulence with which the Turkish authorities deny all guilt was again exhibited in January 2007, when an Armenian newspaper editor in Istanbul, Hrant Dink, who had frequently written about the genocide, and received many threats to which the local police paid no attention, was shot in the street by a young Turk. His funeral was attended by about 100,000 mourners – many of them Turks, including government ministers and parliamentary deputies, but the president and prime minister were absent.[183] Later that year the Turkish government, protesting that ‘the Turkish nation has been accused of something that never happened’, recalled its ambassador from Washington because the US House of Representatives decided that genocide was indeed the correct description of the Turks’ killing of 1.5 million Armenian citizens.[184]

Armenia's standard of living remains depressed by corruption, lack of industrial development and the economic blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey in revenge for the Armenians’ success in occupying Mountain Karabagh. In 2008 President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, rich from recent oil developments, reignited the fighting there and boasted that he was purchasing weaponry for a campaign to regain Karabagh.[185] Meanwhile the Armenian economy relied considerably on financial aid from the United States – $1.6 billion since 1992, ‘making it the biggest recipient of American government aid, per head of population, after Israel, thanks mainly to its influential diaspora’. According to one former minister, incoming dollars from ethnic Armenians abroad, in Russia and the United States, amount to twice Armenia's state budget[186] – although ‘close to a third of the population survive on about £1 a day’. Because of the Turkic blockade Armenia had to rely on Georgia and Iran for access to other markets, and therefore feared that Western pressure on Iran to abandon its nuclear developments might lead to its own further isolation.[187] In connection with Iran's vast petrogas resources Armenia had already become involved with Russia's Gazprom company (notorious as a weapon of international influence) over a new pipeline from Tabriz via Meghri on the Araxes into southern Armenia – and thence to western Europe, possibly through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary by the Nabucco (Nebuchadnezzar) pipeline projected by the Austrian Petroleum Administration (OMV). Armenia's participation in this project would bring the benefit of oil at half-price, but in November 2006 Gazprom, already possessing a 45% stake in it, increased this to 58%, ensuring Russian control over the new pipeline.[188]

Three years before this, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization (BSEC) formed in 1992 on the initiative of the Turkish president Turgut Özal, had rejected, on Russia's instigation, a request from the USA for membership with observer status – a striking example of the potential ramifications of economic and power policies in the Caucasus–Black Sea region. However, one commentator brings a down-to-earth reminder of the modest, but significant realities which underlie the great-power politics, contradicting the apparently rigid official positions while reflecting the realities of day-to-day life in the region:

> On June 6th, BSEC members will gather in Yerevan… for a meeting of their affiliate bank. According to Turkish data, trade between Armenia and Turkey is precisely zero; the border is sealed, out of solidarity with Azerbaijan. As the delegates will observe, every shop in Yerevan brims with Turkish goods.[189]

This contradiction in terms contrasts official 'fact' with the living reality resulting from the private initiative of traders, creating the enterprises they and their local clientele needed. Similarly, since 1994 a wholesale market has existed in the small Georgian town of Sadakhlo where the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani frontiers converge:

> two black-moustachioed men…are standing in front of a sea of ancient…Soviet-era cars and a heaving crowd of traders…show[ing] how commerce across the Caucasus could take off if old animosities between governments…were put aside…Sadakhlo is the largest market in the Caucasus…[This] is not just proof of local traders' talent for getting the most basic goods at the lowest prices. It also suggests that ordinary Armenians

> and Azeris generally rub along perfectly well when their affairs concern trade rather than politics…Buses from…Baku, from Armenia and even from Nagorno-Karabakh itself queue up at the edge of the village… The time-lag between the seasons helps both sides: ‘Soon there will be new carrots from Armenia, then later they will buy ours’, explains Ashot. ‘In summer we sell our tomatoes. In autumn, when ours are over, they bring in lots of theirs’…The Georgians seem content to keep customs duties to a minimum. ‘The trade centre is not a free-trade zone’, explains Jamal Bediev, the market's Georgian director – ‘Still, it solves lots of inter-state problems. Everyone here is a citizen of the CIS…People feel free here and well protected.’

The market satisfies the needs of a very poor region, whose longest border is closed. ‘Perhaps half the population of…Yerevan dress in Turkish clothes bought at Sadakhlo. Rebel Armenians in…Karabakh republic happily drink…Azerbaijani tea produced by their supposed enemies.’[190]

[1] Akkiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, p. 11; Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [pt 2], pp. 216, 219, 226, 228, 256; *Pravda*, 4 September 1991, p. 4, *CDSP*, 1991, vol. 43, no. 36, p. 37.

[2] M. B. Broxup, ‘After the putsch, 1991’, in Broxup, ed., *North Caucasus Barrier*, pp. 219–22; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 36.

[3] *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 46; Sheehy, ‘Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia’, p. 23.

[4] Broxup, 'After the putsch', pp. 219–22; G. Zhukovets, 'Dzhokhar Dudayev: "Vlast my mogli vzyat v techeniye chasa"', *Ogonyok*, 1991, no. 49, pp. 3–5.

[5] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, 'Inter-ethnic relations in Russia in 1992', *Russia and the Successor States Briefing Service*, 1993, 1, 3, p. 12, says 55% of the electorate took part, of whom about 90% voted for Dudayev – giving 49.5% in favour. See also *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 37–9, 42–4; Sheehy, 'Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia', p. 23; Zhukovets, 'Dzhokhar Dudayev', p. 4.

[6] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, 'Inter-ethnic relations', p. 12; Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [pt 2], pp. 11–12; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 47, p. 28; Sheehy, 'Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia', p. 23; V. Tolz, 'The burden of the imperial legacy', *RFE/RL*, 1993, no. 20, pp. 44–5.

[7] Leontyeva, 'Bezhentsev ne budet', p. 5; *Moskovskiye novosti*, 1990, no. 44, p. 4, quoted in Sheehy, 'Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia', p. 21.

[8] A. Meerovich, 'Soviet draft law on public associations makes slow progress', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 28, pp. 6–8; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 44; V. Tolz, 'The law on public associations: legalization of the multiparty system', *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 46, pp. 1–3.

[9] *Izvestiya*, 11 October 1991, *CDSP*, 1991, vol. 43, no. 42, p. 13.

[10] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [pt 2], pp. 233, 258; 'Between Azerbaijan and Chechnya', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 June 1992, p. 1, *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 39; *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 24, p. 25; A. Kazikhanov, 'State of emergency imposed in Makhachkala', *Izvestiya*, 21 May 1992, p. 3, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 20, pp. 22–3.

[11] Mirzajanzade, Interview, p. 4.

[12] 'Dzhokhar Dudayev: krizisa vlastey u nas net', *Severnyy Kavkaz*, 3 April 1993, p. 1, quoted in *RFE/RL Russia and CIS Today: Press Survey*, 23 April 1993, no. 282, p. 44.

[13] Sheehy, 'Power struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia', p. 23.

[14] V. A. Tishkov, 'Ambition and the arrogance of power: the Chechen War' [pts 1 and 2], in his *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: the Mind Aflame*, London, 1997, pp. 183–227.

[15] See Chs. 10–11.

[16] Hewitt, ed., *Abkhazians*, pp. 133–4; Jaimoukha, *Circassians*, pp. 81–2.

[17] A. Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Soviet Power*, Yale, 1998, p. 101; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 46, p. 33. The nations belonging to the Confederation included the Kabardans, Adygeys, Cherkes, Balkars, Karachays, Chechens and Ingush, but not the Osetians or the peoples of Daghestan; see e.g. Jaimoukha, *Circassians*, pp. 85–7.

[18] Hewitt, ‘Abkhazia’, pp. 288, 304–9; Kakagasanov and Musayev, ‘Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki’, pp. 33–4; Mirzajanzade, Interview, p. 4; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 45–6; Sheehy, ‘Power struggle’, p. 25.

[19] Hewitt, ‘Abkhazia’, p. 288; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 46; 1992, no. 5. The nationalities involved included the Avars, Dargans and Laks of Daghestan; and in Circassia the Kabardans, Cherkes, Adygeys and Abkhaz, as well as the Abaza and Shapsug peoples, whose existence had not been mentioned for many years.

[20] Ibrahimbeyli, Interview, p. 13. His figures indicate the degree of continuity among the communist leadership before and after the 1991 coup: in Karachay–Cherkesia forty-six of fifty-two executives, in Kabarda-Balkaria 80% of parliamentary deputies.

[21] Kakagasanov and Musayev, ‘Istoriya Gorskoy Respubliki’, pp. 33–4.

[22] Amkuab and Illarionova, *Abkhaziya*, p. 311; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 10, p. 72; no. 11, p. 77; no. 13, p. 82; no. 14, p. 75.

[23] *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 39; 1992, nos. 8, 11, 14, 36.

[24] S. McMichael, ‘Russia's new Military Doctrine’, *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 23, pp. 45–50.

[25] Amkuab and Illarionova, *Abkhaziya*, pp. 55, 87–9, 97–9, 106–7 (one such appeal was in the name of the president of the International Circassian Association, Yu. Kalmykov, a

Cherkes and one of Russia's top legal experts: *Ibid*., pp. 71–2); *Izvestiya*, ‘The Caucasus region is on the brink of a large-scale war’, 5 October 1992, pp. 1–2, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 41, pp. 12–13.

[26] Amkuab and Illarionova, *Abkhaziya*, pp. 52–4, 71–2, 98–9; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 43.

[27] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [pt 2], p. 217.

[28] Amkuab and Illarionova, *Abkhaziya*, pp. 257–9: the commission named as those most responsible for destabilization in the North Caucasus Russia's Foreign Minister A. V. Kozyrev, Defence Minister P. I. Grachov and Chairman of the Committee on Nationalities Policy V. A. Tishkov.

[29] Ibrahimbeyli, Interview, p. 12.

[30] Akkiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, pp. 11–12.

[31] Amkuab and Illarionova, *Abkhaziya*, p. 187; Babich, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, vol. I, pp. 21–2; Lieven, ‘Cavalier attitudes’, p. 26; *RFE/RL*, 1992, nos. 36, 40–1, 43.

[32] *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10 October 1992, p. 3, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 41, p. 15.

[33] *Izvestiya*, 11 October 1991, *CDSP*, vol. 43, no. 42, p. 13; J. Kampfner, ‘Russia avoids break-up’, *Guardian*, 1992, p. 12; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 42; 1992, no. 36; E. Shevardnadze, quoted

in Hewitt, ‘Abkhazia’, p. 295; *Izvestiya*, ‘Under the green banner’, 8 January 1991, p. 4, *CDSP*, vol. 43, no. 1, p. 17; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, ‘We are the party of Allah’, 8 December 1990, p. 1, *CDSP*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 17, 32.

[34] I. Rotar, ‘Civil war in southern Russia is a real possibility’, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10 October 1992, p. 3, *CDSP*, 1992, vol. 44, no. 41, p. 15.

[35] *Izvestiya*, ‘Caucasus region is on the brink of a large-scale war’, p. 13.

[36] *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 4 February 1992, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 8, p. 6.

[37] ‘Is CIS becoming a major drug power?’, ‘Organized export of prostitutes from CIS is flourishing’, ‘Why the mounting wave of teenage crime?’ and ‘Crime and safety in the public consciousness’, *CDSP*, 1993, vol. 45, no. 18, pp. 15–19, 26; ‘Izvestia series surveys crime in Russia’, *CDSP*, 1994, vol. 46, no. 43, pp. 13–15; no. 47; A. McElvoy, ‘Russia's violent export’, *The Times*, 4 March 1993, p. 18; etc.

[38] It should be noted, however, that the Chechens, far from having olive skin or dark hair, are noticeably ‘European’ in their appearance: Fyodorov, *Istoricheskaya etnografiya*, pp. 17–18.

[39] I. Dementyeva, ‘Roundup’, *Izvestiya*, 19 March 1992, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 18, p. 21; ‘After the roundup’, *Izvestiya*, 7 May 1992, p. 3, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 18, pp. 21–2; *Izvestiya*, 7 March 1988, p. 6, *CDSP*, vol. 40, no. 13, pp. 17–18; *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 9 February 1988, *CDSP*, vol. 40,

no. 8, pp. 7, 31; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 33; 1991, nos. 29, 45; Skinner, ‘Identity formation’, p. 1031; Ye. Solomenko, ‘The “Caucasian syndrome” in Petersburg’, *Izvestiya*, 12 August 1992, p. 3, *CDSP*, vol. 44, no. 32, pp. 28–9.

[40] Dubnov, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. II, pp. 400–12; H. Huttenbach, ‘Counter-revolutionary “ethnic cleansing”: ethnic “sweeping” in post-October Moscow’, *ASN: Analysis of Current Events*, 1993, year 5, no. 9; *Izvestiya*, vol. 44, no. 18, pp. 21–2.

[41] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, ‘Inter-ethnic relations’, pp. 12–13; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 32; Zhukovets, ‘Dzhokhar Dudayev’, p. 3. For a reasoned account of the ‘free economy’ and criminality in Chechenia, see Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 124–36.

[42] S. Baranov, ‘Southern mafia on the eastern front’, *Trud*, 20 May 1993, *CDSP*, vol. 45, no. 22, pp. 19–20; Dementyeva, ‘Roundup’, p. 18. Unfortunately, one murder in London involving two Chechen mafiosi and an Armenian was sufficient to lend wide credence in the West to special Chechen criminality: *The Times*, ‘Doorstep killer may have shot wrong sister’, ‘KGB assassins linked to suburban murder’, 2 May 1994, pp. 1, 3.

[43] Solomenko, ‘“Caucasian syndrome”’, p. 29. See also *Izvestiya*, ‘Criminal Russia: 4. The “nationality” column on a survey about gangs’, 21 October 1994, *CDSP*, vol. 46, no. 45, pp. 14–15.

[44] M. Leontyev, ‘What the hell do we need Chechnya for?’, *Segodnya*, 15 December 1994, *CDSP*, vol. 56, no. 50, p. 9.

[45] Amkuab and Illarionova, *Abkhaziya*, pp. 219, 223, 229, 246.

[46] Lieven, ‘Cossacks sign up’; Ormrod, ‘North Caucasus’, pp. 454–5; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 7; 1992, no. 14; Sheehy, ‘Justice’, p. 19.

[47] Lieven, ‘Cossacks sign up’; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 14, 19–20, 39, 48; 1992, no. 14; Skinner, ‘Identity formation’, p. 1033.

[48] L. Leontyeva, ‘Novaya politicheskaya liniya’, *Moskovskiye novosti*, 18 July 1993, p. 5; *Moskovskiye novosti*, ‘Prezidentskaya sotnya’; *RFE/RL*, 1991, nos. 13, 20, 42, 48, 50; 1992, no. 21, p. 76; no. 22, p. 66; no. 23, p. 75; no. 37, p. 77; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 2, p. 3; no. 5, pp. 3, 6, 7; no. 13, p. 4; no. 14, pp. 5–6; Skinner, ‘Identity formation’, pp. 1018, 1029.

[49] S. Foye, ‘Post-Soviet Russia: politics and the new Russian Army’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 33, pp. 5–12; S. McMichael, ‘Russia's new military doctrine’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 40, pp. 45–7.

[50] S. Foye, ‘Rebuilding the Russian military: some problems and prospects’, *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 44, pp. 51–6.

[51] ‘Russian forces in North Caucasus detailed’, *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 46, 20 November 1992, p. 49.

[52] *Moskovskiye novosti*, ‘Prezidentskaya sotnya’, p. 3; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, vol. 2, 1993, no. 4, p. 3; no. 8, p. 8; no.

10, p. 7; no. 12, p. 2; no. 13, pp. 4, 8; no. 15, pp. 5–6; no. 16, pp. 8, 9; no. 17, p. 2.

[53] Hosking, *History*, pp. 455–9, 466–9, 484–8.

[54] Lieven, *Chechnya*, p. 157.

[55] A. Service, *Russia: Experiment with a People, from 1991 to the Present*, London, 2002, p. 86.

[56] Lieven, *Chechnya*, p. 158.

[57] *Ibid*., p. 161.

[58] *Ibid*., pp. 166–8; Service, *Russia: Experiment*, pp. 25–7; 114–15, 137–47.

[59] Lieven, *Chechnya*, pp. 157–8.

[60] S. S. Montefiore, ‘Mark on the make’, *The Sunday Times Colour Supplement*, 24 September 1995, p. 44; see also the same author's ‘Flashpoint looms in the Great Game’, *The Sunday Times*, 8 October 1995, p. 25.

[61] Montefiore, ‘Flashpoint looms’.

[62] M. Clark, ‘The Bosporus bottleneck’, *Petroleum Economist*, June 2004, pp. 28–9.

[63] *The Economist*, 17 April 1999, pp. 57, 60; see also *The Sunday Times*, 8 October 1995; *The Times*, 4 September

1997, p. 12; *The Economist*, 1 August 1998, p. 31; 28 November 1998, p. 52.

[64] Montefiore, ‘Flashpoint looms’.

[65] ‘Black gold brings hope of return to the glorious days of a century ago’, *The Times*, 25 May 2005, p. 38; ‘Caspian pipedreams no longer’, *The Economist*, 10 March 2001, p. 84; ‘Focus on the Caspian: the pipeline war’, *ASN Analysis of Current Events*, 1994, no. 4, pp. 1–3; ‘The Great Game is revived by pipeline politics’, *The Times*, 17 September 2005, p. 66; A. Lieven, ‘Baku coup threat wanes as rebels swear loyalty’, *The Times*, 6 October 1994, p. 12; ‘Of pipedreams and hubble-bubbles’, *The Economist*, 25 March 1995, p. 59; ‘Oil over troubled waters’, *The Economist*, 28 May 2005, p. 50; ‘Oil pipelines: no way out’, *The Economist*, 28 May 1994, pp. 92–3; *Petroleum Economist*, July 2005, p. 22; October 2005, p. 24; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 27; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 3, p. 10; C. S. Scott, ‘Spy stories keep Baku on the jump’, *The Sunday Times*, 9 October 1994, p. 23.

[66] M. Franchetti, ‘Tycoon vows to topple Georgia's "despot"’, *The Sunday Times*, 11 November 2007, p. 28; S. Marsden, ‘Georgian billionaire who feared assassination found dead at home’, *Press and Journal*, 14 February 2008, p. 5.

[67] *Azerbaijan: New oil deal opens flood-gates*, survey produced for publication in *The Observer* by Images, Words, Ltd, 4 June 1995, p. ii.

[68] N. Wilson, B. Potter and K. Japaridze, *Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan*, London, 2000, pp. 266–72.

[69] M. Franchetti, ‘First lady of oil is power in the land’, *The Sunday Times*, 6 November 2005, p. 26; see also ‘Backing Baku, *Petroleum Economist*, October 2005, p. 24.

[70] ‘The combustible Caspian’, *The Economist*, 11 January 1997, p. 37.

[71] See, e.g. Hosking, *History*, pp. 446–501; Service, *Russia: Experiment*, pp. 13–16ff.

[72] This was first created by the Georgian artist Zurab Tṣereteli as a Christopher Columbus monument, then converted to Peter the Great: Service, *Russia: Experiment*, illus. 7 between pp. 134 and 135, and pp. 203–4.

[73] See *Ibid*., pp. 202–3.

[74] M. Gorkiy, *Meshchane*, Act IV.

[75] These included, in diminishing order of official status, sixteen autonomous soviet socialist republics (ASSRs), five autonomous provinces (APs), and ten autonomous Districts.

[76] E. Teague and V. Tolz, ‘The Civic Union: the birth of a new opposition in Russia?’, *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. I, no. 30, 24 July 1992, pp. 8–9.

[77] Service, *Russia: Experiment*, pp. 131–5, 339–41.

[78] *Ibid*., pp. 102–7.

[79] *Ibid*., pp. 148–9, 175–7.

[80] *Keesings's News Digest*, May 2004, p. 46027.

[81] Jibladze, 'Spotlight', pp. 27–8; *RFE/RL*, 1991, no. 18, pp. 28–9; 1992, no. 14, pp. 74–5.

[82] In 1988–90 'the notorious OMON detachments' of interior security paramilitary police were created and used in many public order and repressive situations, including the siege of Groznyy; V. Yasman, 'Law on the KGB published', *RFE/RL*, 1991, vol. 3, no. 31, p. 15.

[83] Jibladze, 'Spotlight', pp. 27–8; *RFE/RL*, 1990, no. 49, p. 23; 1991, no. 18, pp. 28–9; no. 21, p. 36; no. 22, p. 30; 1992, no. 14, p. 74.

[84] Jibladze, 'Spotlight', pp. 27–8; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 14, pp. 74–5.

[85] *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 45, p. 76.

[86] Jibladze, 'Spotlight', pp. 28–9.

[87] *Ibid*., p. 29; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 45, p. 76; no. 46, p. 70; no. 47, pp. 57–8; *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 1993, no. 2; Zäynullin, 'Duday Batyr', pp. 67–8.

[88] Jibladze, 'Spotlight', p. 30.

[89] Quotations in Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, 'Inter-ethnic relations', pp. 13–14.

[90] *Ibid*., p. 14.

[91] A. Lieven, 'Anxious Chechens defy Russia with threat of guerrilla war', *The Times*, 1 December 1994, p. 15.

[92] H. Gafarly, 'Revenge for betrayal?', *Segodnya*, 7 December 1993, p. 5, *CDSP*, vol. 45, no. 49, p. 15.

[93] *The Times*, 'Moscow stirs Chechen feud', 4 August 1994, p. 13; *RFE/RL*, 1992, no. 10, pp. 72, 75; no. 13, p. 82; no. 14, pp. 74–5; no. 23, p. 75.

[94] J. Adams, 'Moscow wins right to police its neighbours', *The Sunday Times*, 25 September 1994.

[95] *The Times*, 13 December 1994, p. 21.

[96] A. Lieven, 'Russia poised to invade Chechenia', *The Times*, 6 December 1994, p. 13; A. McElvoy, 'Kremlin conjures up a disaster', *The Times*, 4 January 1995, p. 8; *The Times*, 2 December 1994, p. 21.

[97] *The Times*, 13 December 1994.

[98] See Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, vol. III, pp. 402–5, for an understanding of this 'savage law'.

[99] Leading article in *Baltic Independent*, 6–12 January 1995, no. 245, p. 6. See other issues of the same newspaper: 1994, 16–22 December, p. 1; 1995, no. 246, 13–19 January, pp. 1, 2; no. 247, 20–6 January, p. 2; no. 248, 27 January–2 February, p. 2; no. 251, 17–23 February, pp. 1, 8; no. 2, 24 February–2 March, p. 2.

[100] R. Beeston and A. Lieven, ‘Chechens fight on after Yeltsin deadline expires’, *The Times*, 2 December 1994, p. 14; Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 326–9.

[101] R. Beeston, ‘Afghan nightmare haunts Russia's Chechen invasion’, *The Times*, 12 December 1994, p. 11; Beeston and Lieven, ‘Chechens fight on’; see also ‘Intelligentsia scored for disloyal stance on Chechnya’, *CDSP*, 1994, vol. 46, no. 50, pp. 13–15; ‘Most political leaders oppose Yeltsin on Chechnya’, *CDSP*, 1994, vol. 46, no. 50, pp. 9–13.

[102] R. Beeston and A. Lieven, ‘Chechens fire rockets at advancing Russians’, *The Times*, 13 December 1994, p. 14; Leontyev, ‘What the hell do we need Chechnya for?’, p. 9. In a poll in Moscow in December 1994, more than 74% said Russia should recognize Chechenia's independence and only 5.5% opposed it: A. Lieven, ‘Kremlin blamed by Moscow MPs for Chechen raids’, *The Times*, 3 December 1994, p. 16. A later poll confirmed strong public opposition to the war: L. Gudkov, ‘The authorities and the Chechen War in Russian public opinion’, *Segodnya*, 23 February 1995, p. 3, *CDSP*, vol. 47, no. 8, pp. 11–12.

[103] Ibrahimbeyli, Interview, p. 13.

[104] Zäynullin, ‘Duday Batyr’, p. 69.

[105] Many commentators simply used the glib phrase ‘a criminal state’ to describe Dudayev's Chechenia.

[106] While people in Moscow were calling Chechenia a ‘criminal state’, Zianon Pozniak, the Belarus Popular Front's leader, called Russia ‘a criminal, bureaucratic state’: *The Times*, 4 February 1995, p. 15.

[107] Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 124–6.

[108] Scott, ‘Spy stories keep Baku on the jump’.

[109] Archeologists have found much evidence of early agriculture, c. 4000 years BC, in Chechenia, Ingushia and Daghestan, which makes these peoples genuinely ‘autochthonous’: Fyodorov, *Istoricheskaya etnografiya*, pp. 60–5, 84–8, 110–12.

[110] ‘Great Game of death: forgotten Afghanistan lies in ruins’, *The Times*, 9 February 1994; L. Teplinskiy, ‘Afganskaya tragediya’, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 July 1992, p. 4.

[111] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims*, pp. 186–8.

[112] ‘“Kruglyy stol” na temu “Mirotvorcheskaya missiya religioznykh konfessiy na Kavkaze”’, in *Chechnya: tragediya Rossii*, Moscow, 1996, p. 106; *Ekspress khronika*, 25, 21 June 1996, cited in Grannes, ‘“Persons of Caucasian nationality”’, pp. 18–19.

[113] *Moskovskiy komsomolets*, 13 August 1996.

[114] Grannes, '"Persons of Caucasian nationality"', pp. 22–31.

[115] D. D. Mezhidov and I. Yu. Aliroyev, *Chechentsy: obychai, traditsii, nravy: sotsialno-filofskiy aspekt*, Groznyy, 1992, pp. 88–9.

[116] *Ibid*., pp. 68–9.

[117] *Ibid*., pp. 30, 91.

[118] Lieven, *Chechnya*, pp. x–xi, 4–5, 353–4; see also e.g. pp. 324–5, 355–68.

[119] *Ibid*., p. 22.

[120] Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 106–7.

[121] Yu. A. Aydayeva, comp., *Chechentsy: istoriya i sovremennost*, Moscow, 1996, pp. 5, 9–11; Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 155–61; Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict*, p. xii.

[122] Perhaps a rough analogy to the situation of the Rossiyan Federation in relation to the Chechens and other Russian colonies demanding self-determination would be, not the worldwide empires of Britain, France and others, but, within the United Kingdom, Ireland, where, in contrast with the largely 'Britishized' north-east, the 'south' remained principally Roman Catholic and partly Gaelic-speaking. Like the Chechens, many southern Irish resisted assimilation by Great Britain's imperial 'centre', and from the 1850s formed

nationalist organizations which fought the British authorities openly or by terrorism throughout the twentieth century.

[123] *Izvestiya*, ‘Pyatiletiye Checheno-Ingushetii’, 15 January 1939, quoted in Avtorkhanov, *Memuary*, pp. 655–6.

[124] *The Economist*, 2 March 1996, p. 47; M. Franchetti, *The Sunday Times*, 27 November 2005, p. 24.

[125] Politkovskaya: *A Dirty War* and *Putin's Russia*, both translated by A. Tait, London, 2004; and *A Russian Diary*, translated from the Russian by Arch Tait, with a foreward by Jon Snow, London, 2007.

[126] T. Goltz, ‘Slaughter of the innocents: drug-taking Russian troops massacre women and children in Chechen town’ [Samashki], *The Sunday Times*, 16 April 1995, p. 16; Lieven, *Chechnya*, pp. 102–46, 269–99; A. Meier, *Black Earth: Russia after the Fall*, London, 2004, pp. 60–2, 101–24; Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War*, 116–19, 181, 308–15 and passim; Politkovskaya, *Putin's Russia*, pp. 1–268.

[127] Meier, *Black Earth*, pp. 389–97.

[128] *Ibid*., p. 95.

[129] *Atlas SSSR*, 1983, pp. 42, 104, 108; *Kaukasus/Caucasus*, [Map] 1:650,000, 2nd edn, World Mapping Project, Bielefeld, 2007.

[130] T. de Waal, ‘Chechnya: the breaking point’, in R. Sakwa, ed., *Chechnya: from Past to Future*, London, 2005, p. 191.

[131] *Ibid*., p. 191.

[132] Declaration of Independence; see Jaimoukha, *Circassians*, p. 64.

[133] Traho, *Cherkesy*, pp. 50–1; see also English version, Traho, 'Circassians', pp. 14–15.

[134] T. Kuzio, 'International reaction to the Chechen crisis', *Central Asian Survey*, 1996, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 97–109; see also T. Dragadze, 'Report on Chechnya', *Central Asian Survey*, 1995, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 463–71.

[135] F. Jean, 'The problems of medical relief in the Chechen war zone', *Central Asian Survey*, 1996, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 255–8.

[136] Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 214–17; Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War*.

[137] Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, p. 222; Reza Shah-Kazemi, *Crisis in Chechnia: Russian Imperialism, Chechen Nationalism, Militant Sufism*, London, 1995; Rywkin, 'The Communist Party and the Sufi *tariqat* in the Checheno-Ingush Republic', pp. 133–45.

[138] Meier, *Black Earth*, pp. 57–62.

[139] M. Franchetti, 'Chechens beaten on torture train', *The Sunday Times*, 16 July 2000, p. 22; Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, p. 229; L. Leontyeva, 'Filtratsionnyy GULAG'; 'Mesyats v podvale: Chechnya: svidetelstvo iz pervykh ruk',

in Aydayeva, ed., *Chechentsy*, pp. 41–49; Politkovskaya, *Russian Diary*, pp. 242–5, 252–3; C. Scott, ‘Chechen men die in Russian torture trains’, *The Sunday Times*, 5 February 1995, p. 17; G. Whitehead, ‘Bush warning on Chechnya alarms Moscow’, *The Times*, 26 January 2001, p. 23.

[140] Jabrail Gakayev, ‘Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya’, in Sakwa, ed., *Chechnya*, pp. 35–6; Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War*, Chronology, pp. 325–9.

[141] *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 25 March 2003, quoted in Gakayev, ‘Chechnya in Russia’, p. 36.

[142] *Vedomosti*, 24 March 2003, cited in Gakayev, ‘Chechnya in Russia’, p. 37, adding that ‘a significantly higher number of votes were cast than there were voters on the electoral registers’.

[143] Politkovskaya, *Russian Diary*, pp. 115–16.

[144] Sakwa, ‘Introduction: Why Chechnya?’, in Sakwa, ed., *Chechnya*, p. 16.

[145] A. Litvinenko and Yu. Felshtinskiy, *Blowing Up Russia: the Secret Plot to Bring Back KGB Terror*, London, 2007, pp. ix–xix, xxvii, 50–68, 71, 74–81, etc.; Sakwa, ‘Why Chechnya?’, pp. 16, 18–19.

[146] Sakwa, ‘Why Chechnya?’, pp. 18–19.

[147] The figure was 958,309 in the 1989 Census of the USSR: more than the population of Pskov province, but less than

that of the city of Perm.

[148] Sakwa, ‘Why Chechnya?’, p. 15.

[149] V. I. Lenin, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy*, 5th edn, Moscow, 1978, vol. XLV, pp. 357–60.

[150] A. Sheehy, ‘Russia's republics: a threat to its territorial integrity?’, *RFE/RL*, vol. 2, no. 20, 14 May 1993, pp. 34–46; V. Tolz, ‘The burden of the imperial legacy in Russia’, *Ibid*., pp. 41–6.

[151] Comité Tchétchénie, *Tchétchénie: dix clés pour comprendre*, with a preface by Sophie Shihab and new postface, Paris, 2005, pp. 18–19.

[152] *The Times*, 3 February 2000, p. 1.

[153] M. Hauner, *What Is Asia to Us? Russia's Asian Heartland Yesterday and Today*, Boston, MA, 1990, p. 14.

[154] *Aziatskaya Rossiya*, vol. I, pp. viii, 39, 43, 45–59. Incidentally this book shows ambiguity about whether the Caucasus belongs to Europe or Asia, but in practice excludes it from ‘Asiatic Russia’.

[155] ‘War and peace through the bravest eyes’, *The Economist*, 25 July 2009, pp. 23–4.

[156] Politkovskaya, *A Russian Diary*, pp. 33–4; Politkovskaya, *Putin's Russia*, pp. vii, 269–85. Eight years earlier the outspoken female politician Galina Starovoytova had been

similarly murdered, doubtless by a government agent: Meier, *Black Earth*, pp. 316–22.

[157] Politkovskaya, *A Russian Diary*, pp. 157–8, 239.

[158] A useful description of the Pankisi gorge is given in Meier, *Black Earth*, pp. 96–7, 456–7.

[159] *Ibid*., pp. 97–8.

[160] M. Broxup and D. Jamison, eds., 'The North Caucasus: Russians and Chechens: two centuries of relations', *Central Asian Newsletter*, vol. 5, no. 6, London, August 1988, pp. 7–9; P. Zubov's book is *Kartina Kavkazskogo kraya prinadlezhashchego Rossii i sopredelnykh yemu zemel*, 2 vols., St Petersburg, 1834 (i.e. *A Picture of the Caucasus Region belonging to Russia, and Neighbouring Lands*).

[161] Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, p. 153.

[162] *Ibid*., pp. 183–4.

[163] *Ibid*., pp. 153, 160, 189–91.

[164] *The Economist*, 21 September 1996, p. 50.

[165] *The Economist*, 1 November 1997, p. 45; 7 February 1998, p. 48.

[166] H. R. Huttenbach, 'The emptying of Armenia', Association for the study of nationalities: *Analysis of Current*

Events, year 7, no. 8, April 1996, p. 3.

[167] *The Economist*, 1 November 1997, p. 45.

[168] *The Economist*, 7 February 1998, p. 48.

[169] E. H. Herzig, ‘Armenia and the Armenians’, in G. Smith, ed., *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, London, 1996, pp. 262–3.

[170] Wikipedia, ‘Levon Ter-Petrossian’.

[171] *The Economist*, 7 February 1998, p. 48.

[172] *The Economist*, 4 April 1998, p. 43.

[173] R. Beeston, ‘Election win threatens stability in Caucasus’, *The Times*, 1 April 1998; *The Economist*, 4 April 1998, p. 43.

[174] ‘Armenia plunged into crisis’, *The Times*, 28 October 1999, p. 21.

[175] *The Economist* of 22 February 2003 called it the dirtiest election Armenians can remember: *Keesing's Record of World Events*, 2003, pp. 45255, 45301, 45427.

[176] T. Halpin, ‘Armenian elections’, *The Times*, 12 May 2007, pp. 52–3.

[177] *The Economist*, 23 February 2008, p. 46; 8 March 2008, p. 51; *The Times*, 25 March 2008, p. 37.

[178] *The Economist*, 1 November 1997, p. 45.

[179] *The Economist*, 21 September 1996, p. 52; 1 November 1997, pp. 44–5.

[180] *The Economist*, 21 September 1996, pp. 50–2; *The Times*, 25 March 2008, p. 46.

[181] *The Times*, 22 November 2007, p. 51.

[182] The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute website, www.genocide-museum.am/eng/turkish.php.

[183] 'Editor hated by Turkish right gunned down', *The Sunday Times*, 21 January 2007, p. 26; 'Murdered journalist's funeral is a silent rally of defiance', *The Times*, 24 January 2007, p. 34.

[184] 'Ambassador recalled from US amid fury at genocide claims', *The Times* 12 October 2007. Equally senseless and inhumane was the official Turkish attitude towards the 12 million Kurds living in Turkey, who for their loyalty to the state were promised full rights and their own province by Kemal Atatürk in 1918, but in 1924 were deprived of all rights and forbidden even to give children Kurdish names: *Ibid*., and 'Desperate Kurdish cry of protest rises from prison cell', *The Times*, 7 September 1994, p. 10.

[185] *The Economist*, 8 March 2008, p. 51.

[186] *The Economist*, 4 April 1998, p. 43.

[187] Halpin, 'Armenian elections'.

[188] N. J. Watson, 'To boldly go', *Petroleum Economist*, October 2005, pp. 21–2; 'Backing Baku', *Ibid*., October 2005, p. 24; 'OMV takes over Borealis, pushes Nabucco', *Ibid*., August 2005, p. 37; 'Azerbaijan: West Azeri starts to flow', *Ibid*., February 2006, p. 35; 'World gas: EU eyes Caspian for security', *Ibid*., May 2006, p. 10; 'BTC spurs co-operation, *Ibid*., July 2005, pp. 22–4; 'Gazprom pipeline deal points to alliance with Iran', *The Times*, 8 November 2006, p. 57.

[189] 'Oil over troubled waters', *The Economist*, 28 May 2005, p. 50.

[190] 'An uncommon market in the Caucasus', *The Economist*, 3 June 2000, p. 55.

22 Russia's arbitrary politics and Georgian resurgence

Central Caucasus: old borders and renewed Russian imperialism

The long-term complications in North Caucasus during the Russian Civil War and the subsequent formation of non-Russian national territories of the Soviet Union in 1918–36 left competing claims to territory and borders which created inter-ethnic friction for subsequent generations. Map 27, for instance, shows how contorted the borders of North Osetia and Ingushia had become by the 1990s, with the former narrowing to a neck, nearly strangled between Kabarda and Ingushia, but important as a corridor giving the Osetians access to pastures on the Terek. To the east of this corridor in the jigsaw puzzle of national territories, the straggling shape of Ingushia suggests that a bite has been taken out of its western side – which is indeed what happened when the Ingush were banished to Kazakstan. Until then there had been about forty Ingush villages in this Suburban district, extending northwards from the outskirts of Vladikavkaz, but in 1944 that whole district was transferred to North Osetia and, as the Russian government never restored to the Ingush their former settlements after their release from Central Asia, this inevitably became a source of fierce contention between them and the Osetians. Elsewhere also, the border was unfixed for many years, even when Ingushia and Chechenia became separate republics. Thus, for instance, in the south-west, Chechenia-Ingushia possessed a ‘tail’ abutting on North Osetia, and long after their separation it remained undefined which of them held this remote corner among the high mountains forming the eastern wall of the Darial pass, the narrow defile through which Russia's Caucasian Military Highway leads south from Vladikavkaz into Georgia.[1]

Ingushia's borders lay amid a number of potential flashpoints arising from its own disadvantaged relations with Osetia, and those between the Chechens and their neighbours. Although it did not join in the Chechen--Russian wars, Ingushia was forced into a defensive position by the aggressive policies of the Russian government and of North Osetia as its long-standing ally in keeping control over other Caucasian peoples. As we have seen, it was specifically Moscow's favouring of the Osetians in their grabbing of the south-western lobe of Ingushia, and its confirmation of Osetia's possession of Suburban district, that aroused Ingush resentment.[2] In 1989 51,000 Ingush signed a petition for the restoration of their country's 1934 borders, and peaceful protest meetings by masses of Ingush in their unofficial capital, Nazran, began in March 1990, eventually numbering 70,000 people.[3] By October 1992 the Ingush and Osetians were at war, after a gas pipeline was blown up in Suburban district. Hundreds of Ingush in Vladikavkaz, protesting about the killing of a child by an Osetian MVD police vehicle, ran riot and killed two policemen and, while many Ingush were killed or wounded, an armed Ingush raid on the MVD police headquarters seized many firearms and several armoured vehicles and abducted eighty soldiers to Nazran. When serious fighting also occurred in Suburban district, the Ingush appealed for help from Dudayev's Chechenia, but received no response, and on 2 November President Yeltsin imposed a state of emergency in Ingushia and North Osetia and sent Russian ‘peace-keeping’ troops, who had little success in separating the warring parties.[4] Meanwhile, hopes of a more positive attitude on the part of Moscow towards the national political movements of Russia's subject peoples were encouraged by the appointment as chairman of the State Committee on Nationalities Policy of the lawyer Sergey Shakhray, who in 1991 had broken the stalemate in Chechenia resulting from Yeltsin's state of emergency by insisting that Russia's parliament could not go on simply ignoring Chechenia and must take some action. However, Shakhray's own resolution on a separate Ingush Republic, which was eagerly awaited in Nazran, produced disappointment by not mentioning the most important problem – access to Suburban district. Another leading Russian politician, the economist Yegor Gaydar, also made useful proposals for resolving that unjust situation, which similarly came to nothing.[5]

Although the Ingush did not ally themselves with the Chechens in their ongoing War of Liberation, they could not escape involvement with its secondary consequences, because of its proximity and the Russians' indiscriminate targeting of Vaynakhs. It was not surprising, therefore, that Chechen partisans (including those preparing to carry out the most notorious hostage raids) received their training in Ingushia.[6] In recent years the Chechen commander Shamil Basayev had led several daring operations of this kind. One in June 1995 involved a 120-mile drive north through Russian-garrisoned territory to Budyonnovsk, where his contingent stormed the police station and herded 1,000 local people into a hospital as hostages, whom he threatened to kill if the Russians did not withdraw from Chechenia. After the Chechens executed some soldiers, the Russians launched two 'rescue missions' to storm the hospital, ignoring the fact that it contained patients, women and children, and reacting 'with crass brutality' by subjecting it to indiscriminate intensive fire by heavy machineguns and rockets. Eventually, in exchange for releasing the hostages, Basayev was given the use of buses to return his fighters to Chechenia, but the agreement reached with the Russians did not lead to any abatement in their attacks on Groznyy.[7] A similar raid in January 1996 on Kyzlar in northern Daghestan was led by Salman Raduyev, Dudayev's son-in-law. After abducting about 100 hostages to a school and hospital in the neighbouring village of Pervomayskoye they demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechenia – but received only an unrestrained barrages of bullets, shells and bombs, which killed many of the civilian hostages, including women and children. Numbers of casualties on both sides were unreliable because of the lack of co-ordination among the various Russian commanders involved: an unco-ordinated attempt to storm the hospital was made simultaneously by two Russian 'special' assault groups – one from the FSB, the other from the MVD – creating predictable havoc.[8] Meanwhile in western Europe, although Russia had been refused membership of the Council of Europe in 1995 because of its human rights abuses in Chechenia, in March 1996 'Russia for the first time took its seat in the Council chamber', as if Europe considered it a respectable candidate.[9]

In September 2004 the town of Beslan, lying in a sensitive area of North Osetia near a corner of Ingushia about 18 miles from Nazran, became the scene of the most notorious Chechen hostage-taking raid – a disaster involving hundreds of school-children, their parents and teachers. As the Chechens' War of Independence continued into its thirteenth year, their leaders gradually moved from the secular policy of General Dudayev into an explicitly Islamist spirit involving *ghazi*-like self-martyrdom, proclaimed by the frequently worn headband, 'Allahu akbar' 'God is supreme'. Shamil Basayev was the most daring and victorious of these modern *ghazi*s but, unfortunately, he allowed his anti-Russian prowess to blind him to considerations of humanity.

On the morning of 1 September 2004 when pupils, teachers and mothers had assembled outside Beslan's Middle School No. 1 for the annual festive opening of the school year, two Russian army trucks packed with Chechen gunmen and a few black-robed female suicide bombers drove into the playground and, after shooting one protesting woman teacher, herded everyone into the school. More than 1,000 children, women and men were packed into the gymnasium and made to sit on the floor without food or water for over four days, surrounded by explosive devices hung around the room. The temperature became so high that many of the children stripped to their underwear; only a few of the youngest and their mothers were released by the gunmen. What their ultimate intention was is unknown, but on day five a big explosion precipitated an assault on the building by the besieging government troops, during which a few fleeing children escaped the flying bullets, but most were killed as bombs exploded and the gymnasium roof collapsed on them, and ‘What should have been a disciplined military operation degenerated into chaos as local men, many with hunting rifles and other weapons, rushed into the burning school alongside, and often obstructing, Russian commandos’, who cleared the school room by room. The total number of victims was about 330 killed and 500 wounded.[10] Only one of the Chechen gunmen survived and was sentenced to life imprisonment.[11]

What was incomprehensible to parents and teachers who survived the Beslan raid was how, in the North Osetian Republic – crowded with Russian government ‘special’ troops – Basayev's guerrillas had been able to drive up in broad daylight and occupy the school. Despite the Russian command's denial that they had planned an all-out assault on the occupied school, local rumour nevertheless blamed them (as well as slandering some of the teachers, who had done their duty and suffered like all the other hostages). Parents whose children had died or disappeared without trace were devastated, and the local community expected some explanation or confession of responsibility, which the state authorities never expressed, even on the anniversary of the disaster.[12] One striking expression of sympathy with the people of Beslan was the immediate grant of places for eleven of the school's pupils at the Moscow Lycée, a well-equipped private school for orphans and other needy children, founded by the maliciously imprisoned oil millionaire Fyodor Khodorkovskiy. Within months, however, the head of the North Osetian government announced, with ‘gratitude to Moscow’, that two new schools would open in Beslan in September 2005. On the other hand, in March 2006, Putin's prosecutors stepped in to freeze the Khodorkovskiy Lycée's assets, with inevitable effects on its Beslan pupils.[13]

Meanwhile, President Putin, whose handling of the catastrophe had been remote, was obsessed with finally crushing the Chechen people in a ‘war against terrorism’,[14] which in his view demanded more legislation directed against democratic institutions and the rule of law – particularly, in the case of corruption or terrorism, disregarding the principle that a person suspected of a crime must be presumed innocent until proved guilty. As Anna Politkovskaya points out, this ‘has a simple corollary: nobody is innocent any more. In today's Russia this will mean that anybody on whom the security services need to pin anything can be found guilty. The government is preparing an “anti-terrorist” inquisition, an anti-terrorist terror on the back of

Putin's political rampage as he exploits the Beslan tragedy.'[15] The mothers of children who died had trusted Putin's promise that there would be an objective inquiry: a year later there had still been no inquiry, but all the officials responsible for the attack on the school had been exonerated, and now only some local women, in a last protest, locked themselves into the court building where the surviving Beslan raider was on trial.[16]

A week after the raid, on 7 September 2004, Putin had held a 'question-and-answer session' in his Moscow suburban retreat, for a select invited audience of 'foreign journalists and academics with long experience of Russia', at which he expressed his view of inter-ethnic relations in Russia and the Caucasus. While condemning the ruthless 'child-killers' of Beslan, he claimed hypocritically that, unlike the Chechens, the Russian forces had not been guilty of merciless massacres of children – ignoring both Russia's relentless bombing of Groznyy and its murderous 'cleansing' sweeps through every Chechen village. With clumsy tit-for-tat innuendo against the United States he admitted that Russians had committed 'human rights violations' in Chechenia, 'but, like the torture by US soldiers in…Abu Ghraib in Iraq, these were not sanctioned from the top'. Most astonishing was his assertion that 'there was no connection between Russian policies in Chechnya and the events in Beslan' – which suggests not only a denial of the universal human urge to seek revenge for atrocities committed against one's own people, but disregard for the moral imperative for blood-vengeance which Caucasian men in general are obliged by social custom to follow.[17] This is still something that any outsider would risk if he deeply offended a Caucasian or his clan – but a Russian of Putin's kind follows the chauvinist code of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Orthodox-Russian generals, which, in asserting Russia's ‘right’ to possess as colonies the lands belonging to Chechens and other independent Caucasian nations, ignores all indigenous customs while itself acting with violence at least as blind as that of any ‘primitive’ mountain people.

Ingushia and North Osetia, 2002–2008

The Russo-Chechen war, with all its savagery and inhumanity, spilled over into Ingushia and turned it into as much of a hell as Chechenia had been since 1994. Thousands of homeless Chechens sought refuge among their Vaynakh neighbours in the winter of 1999, having been bombed out of their homes in Groznyy and other towns and villages, and left without any support or money.[18] Accommodation of a kind was provided for them: ‘During the month that they have spent in the refugee camps – in these poultry and old stock-raising farms, in cellars, tents and out in the open beside campfires – thousands of people have become deeply embittered, with no regular food or place to wash, and without any occupation…desperately struggling just to survive.’ Politkovskaya calls the first camp she visited ‘Ingushlag: a new concentration camp’. Lying near Karabulak, in the north of Ingushia, it gave the homeless a front seat to watch the regular volleys of rockets and ‘Hail’ missiles launched from Vladikavkaz and Mozdok tearing across the sky to explode in the ruined streets and crowded markets in Groznyy, their daily target. The earth-shaking rumble of the launch and the loud hissing of ballistic rockets passing overhead made some pregnant women abort, and those with babies cease to produce milk – but there was no shop where baby food, clothing or any other basic necessities whatsoever could be bought. In Moscow Politkovskaya suggested to senior army officers that it made no sense, from a military point of view, to treat refugees so harshly, and received the cynical reply:

‘No, it makes a great deal of sense, it's done to soften up the Chechen fighters. Once they learn that their families are in the hands of prison camp guards they'll most certainly become more amenable.’ Politkovskaya adds: ‘The name for it is a concentration camp. All they need now is to start designing gas chambers.’[19]

The mention of prison-camp guards refers to a ‘reform’ introduced under Yeltsin in 1998 by which, at the insistence of the Council of Europe – which Rossiya aspired to gain membership of – the State Directory of Prisons (Russia's GULag) ceased to be part of the Ministry of the Interior (MVD) and was transferred to the Ministry of Justice. The latter thereby acquired a million convicts and 300,000 prison officers (or concentration-camp guards), many of whom, being now superfluous, were permitted to volunteer for service as ‘contract soldiers’ – and joined up for the money and ‘just for kicks’. Some of the ‘Justice Ministry’ troops served as guards for the refugee camps, where the inmates simply called them ‘the criminals’. ‘The refugees say they are the most brutal during “cleansing operations” – it is no good pleading with them, they don't know the meaning of mercy.’ Politkovskaya asked a Justice Ministry official who agreed to meet her: ‘Aren't you uneasy that the “Caucasus” checkpoint and the events we've been describing are all on Ingushetia's territory? Your people were in charge there, though there is no fighting in the area. Does that mean you consider Ingushetia to be the arena for a new war?’ The banal reply was: ‘if General Kazantsev decided that our lads should stand between the army and the refugees then he must have had a good reason’. In fact the modern GULag had swallowed up the Justice Ministry, and many of the soldiers at the notorious ‘Caucasus’ checkpoint and elsewhere were ‘special detachment’ men from there – ‘The men in [kerchiefs and] camouflage fatigues, which bear no indication of service, rank or unit', who hold back the refugees at the checkpoint, greeting 'men and women alike with foul-mouthed obscenities and a machinegun poked in their ribs'.[20]

Ingush men resented the hostile activities of Russian and Osetian security forces in their republic, including numerous abductions of young Ingush males who disappeared without trace but were known to be in Osetian prisons or Russian 'filtration camps', undergoing abuse and torture intended to coerce them into joining the enemy as informers or spies, but quite routinely ending in murder. Over five years (2002–6) about 400 Ingush men 'disappeared' without trace in this way.[21] To avoid this sordid fate imposed by Putin's Russian government young Ingushes took to the hills, prepared to join any anti-Russian guerrilla groups they met. As an Ingush politician explained to a British journalist:

> [Here, as elsewhere,] militant rebels do exist…but the irony is that they are radicalised by the repression…it's really a lack of jobs, endemic corruption, crude prejudice against Muslims and – most of all – extreme brutality on the part of the security services that are the chief factors driving young men to take up arms. It's a natural response if they come at night in masks and take your brother, your father or your uncle and you never see him again…You hit back to preserve your self-respect.[22]

On 21 June 2004 the Ingush had an opportunity for revenge when Basayev mounted several co-ordinated attacks on the pro-Russian authorities in Nazran. Over 200 Chechen and Ingush fighters took over the city at 11 p.m., setting up road blocks, checking identity cards and killing ninety-eight employees of the civil and political police.[23] ‘This was a brilliantly organised guerrilla operation’ which met no resistance from either Ramdhan Kadyrov's[24] renegade Chechen troops,‘nor the thousands of Russian soldiers in Khankala [a base near Groznyy]; nor even the further thousands in reserve in Mozdok; not even by the 58th Army, based in Osetia where some of the fighters had come from’ – to Politkovskaya it seemed as if these elaborate defence forces were nothing but an elaborate illusion. ‘The fighters, of course, bear full criminal responsibility for all these deaths, but equally responsible are the…state authorities…who have lied and done nothing, worrying only about staying in power.’[25]

Although the Ingushes’ relations with Osetia had been tense ever since their return from exile, they became worse in 2002, when Putin deposed the popular Ingush general Ruslan Aushev, an Afghanistan war veteran, and in a rigged election installed as president of Ingushia a stooge, General Murad Zyazikov of the FSB, who ‘promptly set about appointing his relatives and allies to prominent positions’, while Ingushia's economy collapsed and corruption became rife. In 2007 Ingushia depended on subsidies from Moscow for 88% of its annual budget, and unemployment reached 65–70%. Zyazikov and his régime therefore evoked only hatred among his compatriots.[26] Popular support for Ruslan Aushev increased, but he knew that ‘The power vertical was not created [by Moscow] in order to address the population's grievances’, that ‘no one is going to listen either to me or to the demonstrators’, and that ‘the federal centre will only intervene to restore order if and when it considers it expedient to do so’. Rumours that he had criticized Zyazikov in a speech in Moscow led to leaflets denigrating Aushev being circulated by Ingushia's Putinist authorities, while two anti-Zyazikov political activists, Maksherip Aushev and Mahomed Yevloyev, were arrested after a mass protest in Nazran in January 2008, and imprisoned without trial in Kabarda for several months. Five simultaneous rallies calling for Ruslan Aushev's reinstatement as Ingushia's president were scheduled for 6 June 2008 in Nazran, Malgobek, Karabulak, Magas and Ordjonikidzevskaya, but it seems improbable that any of them were held.[27]

‘To silence media coverage of public protests, the… authorities [in Ingushia] variously detained, kidnapped, expelled, beat and issued death threats against sixteen journalists and human rights defenders. Having…[silenced] free speech, the authorities give those grieving for their loved ones and seeking…to express dissent nowhere to turn to.’[28] One Ingush who persisted in defying Moscow's organs of coercion by distributing information was Mahomed Yevloyev, a former state prosecutor and ‘outspoken critic of Russia's brutal rule in Ingushetia’, who founded a local website. As it provided uncensored information about current events, Zyazikov's officials tried to close it down, but thousands of people still contrived to read it. However, on 31 August 2008, when Yevloyev returned to Nazran's airport after a visit to Moscow, he was surrounded by armed police and pushed into their vehicle; 20 minutes later, after being shot in the head, he was dumped outside a hospital to die – ‘just the latest example of Russia's murderous grip on the republic’. The correspondent quoted here suggests that the Ingush people, sharing with the Chechens ‘an exquisite sense of honour and hospitality’ and being Sufic Muslims, ‘could be a great example of a free and modernising republic’ – if Moscow had not ‘turned what was once one of its most loyal provinces into a disaster zone’.[29]

The human rights group Memorial's office in Nazran commented that the kidnapping, beating and murdering of people which the police in Ingushia continually carried out with complete impunity gave the lie to Moscow's claim to be the guarantor of stability in the Caucasus. For instance, Yevloyev's family declared vengeance against members of the government whom they blame for his death. Meanwhile, Zyazikov claimed that it was ‘Islamic separatists’ who were responsible for such deaths, shamelessly using this as a pretext for sending teams of masked secret police to ‘liquidate’ people they arbitrarily said were Islamic terrorists. ‘At least 40 people were murdered in extrajudicial killings in 2007 alone…[M]any of the so-called terrorists were unarmed young men who were shot at home or in the street, and human rights groups estimate a further 158 people have disappeared without trace since Zyazikov took office in 2002.’ One young Ingush man's story illustrates what had become a commonplace occurrence. Before taking a job for the equivalent of £35 a month moving heavy boxes in the post office, he had been earning three times as much as a hospital security guard. The trouble was that every night the police dumped dead Muslim fighters at the mortuary, leaving blood everywhere and, as Muslims don't abandon their own, they came later, bristling with firearms, to retrieve the bodies. ‘Was I going to guard dead men without a weapon for £100 a month?’[30] The assertion repeatedly made by Rossiya's President Dmitriy Medvedev and Ingushia's President Zyazikov that Ingushia was a paragon of stability and growth was sheer fantasy – as was Zyazikov's daily life:

> Zyazikov lives isolated in a fortified complex called Magas (‘Sun City’) but appears regularly on state television giving glowing reports of ‘gasification’ and

> house-building in his republic. The reality is that Ingushetia…is poverty-stricken and terrorised. A few miles across the border in Vladikavkaz, the capital of… North Osetia, shoppers glide through department stores and stop for a break at the Vogue Café. Nazran, by contrast, is a big dust-glazed village of broken pavements and potholed roads…and a sprawling bazaar is one of the few sources of peaceful work.[31]

One of the chief reasons for Medvedev and Zyazikov's collusion in their fantasy about Ingushetia's success, is that 'Zyazikov delivers stunning election results.' In the elections to Rossiya's Parliament in December 2007 'Ingushetia reported an absurd 99% vote for the pro-Kremlin United Russia party. The official turnout was 98%. Before his death Mahomed Yevloyev ridiculed these results and helped organize a petition of 80,000 Ingush (half the electorate) who testified that they had not even voted.'[32]

The Osetians, the Georgians and Russia

It might be thought that there is little to write about the North Osetians in the early twenty-first century, considering that, collectively, they continued to function in ways that recommended them to Rossiya's metropolis, acting obediently as any subordinate administrative unit should. Ambitious men followed the Moscow line – no longer attending Communist Party meetings, but conforming to government policy in order to maintain or improve their positions. As we have seen, 'The Chechens and the Ossetians represent the two extremes in the attitude of the local Caucasus peoples towards the Russians – the most irreconcilable resistance in the case of the Chechens, and the most far-reaching appeasement in the case of the

Ossetians.'[33] Thus the North Osetians, being to a considerable extent co-opted into sharing with Russia's imperial authorities responsibility for administration and 'security' in North Caucasus, could be considered as 'near-Russians' and reliable allies. Among their rewards for this loyalty was Moscow's favouring and abetting them in excluding the Ingush from Suburban district (although a much harsher Russian intention – to exterminate completely the Ingush as well as the Chechens – now seemed probable).

Although Osetians in general collaborate effectively with the Russian authorities and are nominally Orthodox Christians, they cannot be equated with Russians, but remain staunchly North Caucasians, owing allegiance to clan brotherhoods (*teips*) and adhering strictly to their pre-Christian conventions of blood-vengeance, as a notorious case in 2002 confirmed:

> When a North Osetian architect named Vitaly Kaloyev lost his wife and two children in a mid-air collision between their airliner and a cargo plane over Germany…he seemed a finished man. Abandoning his career, he grew a beard, became a recluse, and was seen mourning in all weathers at his family's graves in…Vladikavkaz. But Kaloyev…was not quite finished…

He learned some German and found out the name and address in Switzerland of the air-traffic controller who had been on duty at the time of the accident (but could scarcely be deemed guilty of intentional murder); two years later Kaloyev went to Zürich to see him, and after a brief altercation pulled out a knife and killed him. (In the same spirit, after the Beslan school disaster an Osetian father quietly announced: 'We will mourn first. Then we will find out who has done this and we will kill them all'.)[34] On Kaloyev's return to Osetia he became a national hero, even on an official level: the North Osetian government rewarded him with a seat in their 'cabinet', and when he went to South Osetia in August 2008 after the Russian takeover and the province's declaration of independence, 'the whole proxy government came out to hug him'[35] – demonstrating the sense of kinship existing between the Osetians in Georgia and those in North Osetia.

Yet, being an Osetian was not a simple, unambiguous matter, as the two separate and constitutionally different political entities designated North and South Osetia existed in geographical contiguity, but in political separation so fundamental that it could not be ignored or legally altered without civilized consultation between the Georgian and Rossiyan governments as equals:

> Today's Osetians live on the northern and southern slopes of the central part of the Main Caucasus range and its foothills…[This range] divides the territory into two sections: the northern section forms what is now called the North Osetian SSR, while the southern section forms the South Osetian autonomous province [OF THE GEORGIAN SSR].[36]

The addition of the phrase in capitals is essential, and its absence in the quotation (from a work published by the USSR's Academy of Sciences) along with the vague phrase 'divides the territory' (*which* territory?) betray the obfuscation and anti-Georgian bias which pervades the work. The next paragraph does state the essential fact unambiguously: 'The North Osetian ASSR is bounded on the south *by the Georgian SSR*' (italics added). Clearly the northern territory (the former Osetian ASSR) is an ethnic constituent republic within the Rossiyan Federation, while its southern analogue, 'South Osetia' (a smaller territory with the inferior rank of AP), is, as it has always been since the Bolshevik revolution, an integral part of the Republic of Georgia – which is one of the internationally recognized independent states into which the USSR disintegrated in January 1993. The complicated nomination of ethnic territories of various sizes, which occurred in 1918–36 under the direction of Stalin, while basically giving fair recognition to the many less numerous peoples of Russia's empire, left a particularly potent legacy of concealed problems. One of the most 'loaded' of these was the designation of this area of Georgia in the mountains north of Gori (where isolated pockets of Osetians had lived for several centuries) as the 'South Osetian Autonomous Province' – an integral part of Georgia governed by the Georgian SSR government in Tbilisi, but having its own local administration and sending five deputies to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow. On the other hand, the larger Osetian community north of the mountains, originally designated in 1921 as two separate 'Ethnic Regions' within the RSFSR, was later combined into a single AP ('promoted' in 1936 to ASSR status) which sent eleven deputies to Moscow.[37]

One might assume from their relative sizes that North Osetia – 20,720 square miles and 632,428 inhabitants (1989) – would be the more important homeland of the Osetian people, while South Osetia – 10,101 square miles and only 98,527 inhabitants – being a lesser, intrusive enclave within the Georgian Republic, would be more provincial. However, the 'Georgian' Osetians living in the southern territory did not all remain there: their share in Georgia's population fell from 53% in 1926 to 39% in 1989, as many of them dispersed all over Georgia as immigrants.

They mostly settled in towns, the greatest concentration being in Tbilisi but, wherever they lived, Osetians neither asserted their own separateness nor experienced any discrimination, and were considered by Georgians to be good neighbours. Schools for Osetians were opened throughout Georgia, and many received higher education and obtained good jobs. Not only were Osetians fluently bilingual, but many considered Georgian to be their mother tongue, and many intermarried with Georgians.

On the other hand, Georgia's 'South Osetians' in their 'autonomous province' considered themselves at least as good Osetians as their compatriots in North Osetia, because they knew that there the Russian language was so prevalent that 'until 1988 there was not a single Osetian school', whereas in South Osetia 'by 1990…there were ninety schools teaching in Osetian', and its 'capital', Tskhinvali, had a teachers' training college, a branch of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, a state library and other cultural establishments, and more books in Osetian per head of its population were published in Georgia than in North Osetia. 'All this indicated a higher national self-identity among Osetians living in the autonomous area within Georgia' than among the larger, original Osetian homeland in the north.[38]

It is understandable that the 'South Osetians', being in a way exiles, should especially cherish their national culture – although in fact they lived less than 70 miles from Vladikavkaz. In the whole of Georgia there were 164,055 Osetians, forming 3% of the population, but in the 'South Osetian AP' (formerly part of Georgia's Java province) Georgians were outnumbered more than 2 to 1 by Osetians,[39] and in Tskhinvali, with 43,000 inhabitants, Osetians numbered 31,500 (75%).[40] Clearly these southerners formed a special category of particularly patriotic, indeed nationalistic, Osetians – although, so far as the northern limit of Georgia's Osetian province is concerned, ‘The fact that the natural border between Georgia and Ossetia follows the Great Caucasus Range and Darial gorge was never disputed even by Ossetian scholars.’[41] In other words, the Osetians, like the Georgians (and anyone else who cared to learn the historical and administrative facts) knew that ‘South Osetia’ was an inherent part of Georgia and that Georgia's border with ‘Russian’ North Caucasus ran along the summits and ridges of the Great Caucasus range – and certainly not along the southern border of ‘South Osetia’.

Another simple fact about North and South Osetia is that they were *not* ‘artificially divided by Stalin's federal structure’,[42] but by nature – the Caucasus range rises to between 8,500 and 15,000 feet at the level of the passes which are snow-free in summer, and has many peaks between 16,000 and 18,500 feet. Crossing this natural divide by a pass no better than a donkey-track was always something of a heroic endeavour, which until the late twentieth century created a sense of isolation the one from the other. Nor could these two Osetian communities have demanded ‘*re*-unification’, as they had never formed a single community or official territory. The frontier between the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, founded in 1921 (but in 1922–36 subsumed into the Transcaucasian Federation) and the ‘Rossiyan Soviet Federal Socialist Republic’ created in 1921 (now the ‘Rossiyan Federation’), was however, unquestionably a constitutional reality.[43]

Despite the formidable mountain barrier, the climatic and economic differences between the two separate Osetian territories are slight, and the basic factors of high altitude and low temperature are common to the mountainous and forested parts of both. In climate South Osetia does benefit slightly from its more southerly situation, but only 10% of its territory is suitable for cultivation, whereas North Osetia, with more than twice the area, stretches north into the fertile Terek plain, where many different cereals, fruits and vegetables are farmed, and there is much industry and quite high density of urban population.[44]

Georgia: North Caucasus contacts and Putinist aggression

Osetians were not the only North Caucasian people with whom Georgia had long-standing connections. One fact which reasserted itself as the events of the first decade of the twenty-first century unfolded was that, despite the obvious validity of the geographical division into North Caucasus and South Caucasus (the latter often misnamed by the Russian term 'Transcaucasia'), the divide was not absolute. The Kartvelians of the Mtkvari valley always had contacts with the mountain Georgians inhabiting the gorges of the north-eastern districts – the Tushi, Khevsuri, Pshavi, Mokheve and Mtiuli tribes – but even beyond these, they had long-standing relations with the Ingush and Chechens (formerly known to Georgians as Kists) living to the east of the Aragvi valley. A Georgian Academy of Sciences symposium explains that good-neighbourly relations existed between the Vaynakhs and the east Georgian mountain tribes (and, through these, with the Georgian state itself) on the economic, political and cultural levels, thanks to the network of tracks existing throughout the highlands. Georgian Christian influence among the Vaynakhs, including missionary activity and acquaintance with literacy, dates from the eleventh century.[45]

Despite the rugged terrain, the two regions were linked not only by well-known passes west of the Aragvi and Terek valleys, but also among the high mountains (up to 14,760 feet) of the remote corner of Georgia, where the Pankisi gorge lies beyond the upper reaches of the river Alazani, on a rough but vital route into Chechenia via Shatili and the Argun valley. At the end of the twentieth century, as Rossiya's first war on the Chechen people ceased temporarily, the Chechens worked to improve the highest, roughest stages of the route to the border, where they hoped the Georgian government would continue the upgraded road to Shatili and beyond, towards Pankisi. Thus began Georgia's courageous, but cautious involvement in keeping open this route of escape (and other unofficial, often contraband or politically suspect traffic) between Chechenia and the asylum of Pankisi gorge, where homeless refugees or itinerant Muslim propagandists might find shelter, meagre food, beds, medical care or recruits:

> In return for its half-hearted blockade around Abkhazia, which tried to break away from Georgia in 1993, Russia is demanding that Georgia seal its own border with Chechnya. Georgia is torn between upsetting its big northern neighbour and upsetting the formidable Chechens…[But] Georgians have respect for the Chechens’ brave fight against Russia. And Georgia's leaders see that Chechnya is pivotal to the region's security.[46]

Moscow also heeded rumours of 'Islamic terrorists' establishing themselves in Chechenia and Georgia, such as the report in 1999 that the Saudi al-Qaida leader, Abu Havs, was in Pankisi gorge, where he had set up training camps, opened a hospital and built a mosque.[47] Confirmation that fanatical Islamists had established themselves to some extent in the gorge was provided by an Armenian journalist who learned in Tbilisi that 'women must wear headscarves and long dresses in the Pankisi gorge', and that 'Wahhabi' extremists had a mosque in the neighbouring village of Duisi.[48] Meanwhile in Tbilisi the Georgians tolerated an unofficial Chechen consulate:

> probably the smallest embassy in the world…Two rooms, some junk-shop furniture and a large flag…are the closest formal link that embattled Chechnya has with the outside world. Chechnya's envoy, Hizir Aldamov, is in diplomatic limbo: the Georgian authorities do not recognise him formally, but consult with him frequently…Mr Aldamov has…important issues to consider…[such as] keeping open Chechnya's border with Georgia, which is only…54 miles long. So far, Chechens can still cross it more or less at will – assuming they are fit enough to follow tracks over snowy mountains, dodging the Russian air force.[49]

The Russians, relentless in their hunting and extermination of Chechen refugees, indeed started sending bomber aircraft deep into Georgian territory to terrorize the Pankisi gorge (six raids in July--August 2002 alone) to kill whatever gunmen – or women and children – sought refuge there. An impression of the mixture of danger and everyday life in the Pankisi gorge is conveyed in a report by *The Economist*'s correspondent, who was taken to a wedding there by 'Zia, a black-clad Chechen widow, who was bringing a vast cake’. Although Russia claimed that there were hundreds of Chechen fighters there, he saw only refugees, and no Georgian police.[50]

New Georgia and old problems

Georgia appeared to have received a new lease of life in January 2004, when the election of a successor to President Shevardnadze was won by the 37-year-old Mikheil Saakashvili. He had grown up during a dramatic period in Georgia's history: the decline and collapse of the Russian KP's oppressive régime, Zviad Gamsakhurdia's declaration of Georgian independence, and his rule as a nationalist dictator inciting civil war until his downfall in 1989–92. Saakashvili belonged to a liberated generation who turned toward the liberal values embodied in the twentieth-century civilization of western Europe and America. Having chosen to study at the University of Kiev in newly independent post-Soviet Ukraine, where he took a law degree in 1992, Saakashvili availed himself of the opportunity offered by an American charitable trust to ‘outstanding citizens’ of the former USSR to pursue post-graduate studies in the USA, with a view to fostering ‘democratization and the transition to a market economy’ in their own countries.[51] This enabled him to study at Columbia and George Washington Universities in 1993–5 and graduate as Master of Laws. Saakashvili's ascent to the supreme post in Georgia did not follow immediately, as President Eduard Shevardnadze was still in office, embodying customary concerns and administrative practices inherited from Soviet Russia.

Among Saakashvili's closest associates at that time was Zurab Zhvania – ‘one of Georgia's most urbane, intelligent, astute and experienced politicians’ – a biology graduate of Tbilisi university, who during the liberalizing years of Gorbachov's government was a founder member of Georgia's Green Party. In 1995, at the age of 32, he was leader of the Georgian Citizens’ Union, which had won the parliamentary election with an absolute majority. Shevardnadze appointed him as speaker, but soon the government's failure to introduce radical reforms, in particular against corruption, made Zhvania yield his post to Saakashvili in 2001, while he himself headed a new United Democrats Party until his premature death early in 2005.[52]

An important advance at this time was the emergence in male-dominated Georgia of women in politics. The acting president in the interim between Shevardnadze and Saakashvili was Nino Burjanadze, a mother of two and a graduate in international law from both Tbilisi and Moscow universities, who championed Western values and foresaw Georgia as a member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. She continued to play a prominent part in Georgian politics, eventually in opposition to Saakashvili.[53]

The events in November 2003 that allowed this new generation of post-communist Georgians to take over and terminate Shevardnadze's eight years as president became known as ‘the Rose Revolution’: Shevardnadze, after an election widely perceived to have been ‘grossly rigged’ in his favour, went to the parliament building on 22 November for the inauguration. However, Mikheil Saakashvili, along with members of the opposition parties – declaring the inspiration they derived from the recent ‘Orange Revolution’ in Ukraine, by carrying roses in their hands – burst into the chamber and interrupted the proceedings. Shevardnadze and his bodyguards fled, his subsequent attempt to impose a state of emergency collapsed, and in a rerun in January 2004 Saakashvili won an overwhelming majority and became president of Georgia. His declared aims included improving pay and pensions, providing social services for the poor, increasing state revenue and abolishing corruption. However, despite Georgia's democratic fervour, the long tradition of ballot-stuffing had not disappeared, and it was stated that Saakashvili had received 96% of the votes cast.[54]

By 2008, when the next presidential election was held, the voting figures were more moderate, with Saakashvili gaining 52% against his competitor, L. Gachechiladze's, 25%, and it was said that the rate of corruption in general had been ‘drastically reduced’. It was also rather fulsomely reported in his favour by World Bank Group – a responsible international body providing loans and other assistance to less-developed countries – that Georgia was ‘the number one economic reformer in the world’ and ranked high among neighbouring countries in terms of ‘ease of doing business’.[55] However, although politically Georgia enjoyed favour in the West, and its relations with the USA were good, perceptions of President Saakashvili himself were cautious because of his volatility (perhaps a not uncommon Georgian tendency). He was considered to be ‘difficult to manage’, with a tendency to make risky moves that ‘have often caught the US unprepared…leaving it “exposed diplomatically”’.[56] This occurred not only in connection with the United States, but with many of his actions within Georgia itself.

Among the first measures by which Saakashvili tried to gain public support was his celebration of Georgian patriotic symbols. On 26 January 2004, immediately after his inauguration, a new national flag with five red crosses on a white ground was adopted, implying Georgia's association with the Crusades.[57] The following day, at the Kashveti Church of St George, he rehabilitated Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgia's first president, by declaring him ‘a great statesman and patriot’ and, in order to ‘resolve the lingering political effects of his overthrow’ and ‘put an end to disunity in [Georgian] society’, it was decreed that his body would be brought from Chechenia for burial in Tbilisi and that one of its central streets would be renamed after him.[58]

As we have seen, in the late twentieth century the breakdown of the established USSR order brought considerable liberation, but also the surfacing of suppressed ethnic grudges in the Georgian Republic, leading to skirmishing between neighbouring communities, and stealing – in which each side blamed the other. The civil war in Abkhazia which began in the early 1990s, brought the intrusion of Russian forces into Georgia under the guise of ‘peace-keepers’, who may have done something to prolong Abkhazian resistance to total subjection to the Georgians, but chiefly prevented them from developing their own independent homeland.

A major success in domestic diplomacy during President Saakashvili's first months in office was the reintegration of Acharia into Georgia. The situation in this south-western province was unique and intriguing, as a witness in the 1990s described:

> It was probably the best-dressed evening this part of the world has seen since the Russian Revolution when the wealthiest potentate of the new Caucasus threw a night of Italian opera in a weird but magnificent display of grandeur beside the Black Sea. All the

ambassadors and generals…the rich and the corrupt, forsook the elegant balconies of old Tbilisi and the oil tycoons' palaces of Baku to be flown to the hothouse capital of Batumi, in the semi-independent fiefdom of Acharia. The performance was Verdi's Aida, set in pharaonic Egypt; but it was soon clear that the real pharaoh was Aslan Abashidze, chairman of the Acharian Autonomous Supreme Council. The dapper dictator has ruled this lush, steamy and fertile land since the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. But the aim of this dazzling night was to remind his guests that he is the scion of a family of Begs, local princelings, that ruled from 1453 to 1878. Whisking them in on a whim and flying them away again bore the true style of an eastern potentate…

The opera was to begin at five. The house went silent as Abashidze entered. He sat in the midst of the audience surrounded by guards. The only way he could be assassinated was by killing half the audience. Abashidze has already survived about ten attempts, including one in which he was shot in the neck…

'My aim here is to create European capitalism in Batumi, our free port. We don't talk. We *do*,' he insisted. Not only do the trains run on time, but the operas are in tune and the cast in their gleaming pharaonic costumes move without a flaw…As the curtain fell the audience clapped madly…but Abashidze was already in his shiny black Mercedes, followed by two Jeeps containing bodyguards, driving at breakneck speed to the Intourist hotel for another banquet.[59]

Born in 1938, Abashidze had by 1995 not only become chairman of the Acḥarian Supreme Soviet and vice-chairman of the Georgian Parliament, but had also founded a political party, the ‘Acḥarian Union of Revival of All Georgia’, some of whose members gained seats in the November 1995 elections.[60] He was also an industrial developer. In the words of another British journalist,

> Gleaming white marble is an uncommon sight in post-communist nursery schools. Crumbling concrete is the norm. But then Ajaria…is an uncommon place. The oddness unfolds during the official tour for foreigners of the capital, Batumi…[featuring] a chess palace and a remarkable new kindergarten, replete with gym…computer salon and swimming pool. Keep your eyes on the Italian marble, and it is not completely fanciful to think that chaotic, impoverished Georgia – or at least this bit of it – could one day fulfil its stated desire to join the EU. The company that puts up these puzzle palaces is owned by the president's son. Indeed, the most signal feature of Ajaria is that the president and his family are everywhere.[61]

Abashidze also loved expensive speedboats, and in 2000 was having a naval cutter built with a machinegun on deck and ‘a snazzy galley-cum-cocktail-lounge fitted out in the president's favourite white leather’. It could do 68 mph and cost $1.2 million. But Abashidze insisted that he was not extravagant: ‘I want to show people how they are going to live in the future’, he said. ‘Ajarians are certainly grateful to him for keeping their patch of Georgia out of the civil wars that racked the Caucasus in the 1990s. And by the miserable standards of the rest of the region, things work comparatively well: salaries are paid on time; electricity and heating function quite often.’ As for politics –

> ‘We had some opposition parties, but they realised it was pointless and gave up’, says a journalist from the cheer-leading local media. The republic is a police state, where the guards around the presidential palace go glassy-eyed and twitchy when a visitor asks for directions to the main entrance. A Russian military base, which Mr Abashidze, unlike the Georgian government, sees no reason to close, adds another layer of security…[He] has his eye on the presidency of Georgia itself…That might be stretching things. He seems to manage 400,000 Ajarians smoothly enough. But ramshackle Georgia's 5.3m people need more than a few new buildings and a personality cult to keep them happy.[62]

This was the time of greatly expanding production in Azerbaijan's Caspian oilfield, and the need to lay a pipeline to carry Baku oil to the world outside by a route avoiding Russian territory. For a time the most favoured route was from Baku through Georgia to a newly built terminal (in which British Petroleum was involved) at Supsa near Poti in Acharia, which would also be served by a new passenger railway. From there both oil and passengers would be shipped across the Black Sea to Ilichevsk in Ukraine, and thence overland to western Europe. Because of uncomfortable relations with Russia, however, this scheme was abandoned in favour of the overland pipeline via Tbilisi and north-eastern Turkey as far as Jeyhan – a port on the Mediterranean giving access to many European countries.[63]

Abashidze was not simply an eccentric local despot to be tolerated by Tbilisi, as he ‘largely ignored the central Georgian government and was viewed by many as a pro-Russian politician’. Although Acḥaria was superficially colourful, it was ‘an area of rampant criminality’ where Abashidze's word was law. In April 2000 the Georgian parliament gave the Acḥarian ASSR the status of an autonomous republic, but its relationship to the rest of independent Georgia remained undefined. The Abashidze régime asserted that local legislation took precedence over the laws of the central Georgian government, but the latter ‘ha[d] been reluctant to challenge illegal and undemocratic activity by the Ajaran authorities, purportedly because it seeks to avoid open separatism’. Consequently, in elections held in Acḥaria in November 2003 fraud was, as usual, widespread, and Abashidze's ‘Democratic Revival Union’ still claimed 95% in its favour.

Meanwhile in Tbilisi Shevardnadze had stood down from the presidency, and on 4 January 2004 Mikheil Saakashvili won the election which soon made him president of Georgia. One of his first endeavours was to regularize the situation in Acḥaria by forcing its corrupt officials to disgorge the tax and customs dues which they had appropriated, and disarming the illegal pro-Abashidze paramilitaries.[64] The latter, however, were determined to resist the importation of the Rose Revolution into Acḥaria, as Saakashvili found when in March he headed an election campaign to visit the province during Abashidze's absence in Moscow, only to find his access blocked at the river Cḥoloki, where border guards refused to let him pass and informed him that three bridges had been blown up to keep him out. As this brought Georgia to the brink of civil war,[65] Saakashvili retaliated by imposing an economic blockade on Acḥaria. When a meeting took place on 16 March Abashidze agreed to allow free and fair elections and to disarm his paramilitary groups in exchange for Saakashvili's lifting economic sanctions, but the two men soon reverted to ‘mutual accusations and ultimatums’. Significantly, Abashidze maintained close contact with the Moscow government, and it was intervention by the secretary of Putin's Security Council that finally persuaded him to resign and depart for the Russian capital in May 2004. Meanwhile Russia's foreign minister threatened Saakashvili, warning him that any use of force against Abashidze would have ‘catastrophic consequences’. Obviously the Georgian president perceived the brutal threat, and was particularly worried by the important role planned for Acharia in Russia's plans for future control over Georgia, the implied intention to annex Abkhazia, and its scarcely concealed similar intention towards South Osetia.[66]

One asset purposely left behind in 1994 by Putin's predecessors in ‘Transcaucasia’ to provide future Russian rulers with ready facilities were military bases, including tanks, armoured troop carriers and artillery, situated in Armenia at Gyumri and in Georgia at Vaziani, Batumi, Akhalkalaki, Javakheti and Gudauta. There were many Georgians and Armenians among their 8,000 personnel, but also a new element: a body of Russian ‘peace-keepers’, supposedly to restrain both sides in Georgia's fight against ‘separatist’ Abkhazia.[67] However, Russia's real intentions were obvious, as was the fact that ‘Russia continues to be “clever and brazen” at manipulating Georgia, just as they manipulated Armenia and Azerbaijan.’ Although the several thousand Russian troops patrolling Abkhazia as ‘peace-keepers’ had been sent to ‘help’ Abkhazia against Georgian domination, in fact it was covert Russian aid that had incited Abkhazia to fight for independence in the first place – thus providing an excuse for Russian intervention.[68]

By now Moscow had adopted a spurious theoretical justification for meddling in the affairs of the Soviet Union's successor states on the grounds that in most of the latter, considerable numbers of Russians had chosen not to move back to their homeland, but to go on living there as alien immigrants. Around 1992 Russia invented the ambiguous term ‘the near abroad’ for all states formerly subject to the Russian Empire, such as Ukraine, the Baltic republics, the ‘Transcaucasian’ states and those in Central Asia.[69] It also suited Moscow's ends to adopt a concept in international relations first popularized in 2001 by Western ‘peace-activists’ – ‘the responsibility to protect’.[70] This would become the supposed right, and indeed duty, of Mother Russia to crash the frontier of any now independent country which it had formerly occupied (and therefore could claim to be ‘our territory’) on the pretext of ‘protecting Russian citizens’ residing there from abuse by the native population.

The first project for a modern transport route crossing the Caucasus range had been mooted in the nineteenth century, but came to nothing because of the difficulty of building a railway line among the rugged high summits. By the 1980s, however, when modern technology had made railway construction more feasible, a grandiose project was conceived, and in some places actually started, to take a twin-track railway up valleys and gorges and over seventy-two bridges, to an altitude of about 4,000 feet, where a 14-mile tunnel would take it through beneath the highest range. This scheme too was abandoned – probably not so much because of technical difficulties, but because it would have passed almost exclusively through Georgia, bringing the country many benefits.[71] Meanwhile Moscow had a new road built southward from Vladikavkaz as another gambit towards undermining Georgian independence.

Ominous Russian innovations in the Caucasus were the re-establishment of North Caucasus Military District in January 1993 as a frontier zone of the Rossiyan Republic,[72] and the upgrading of their route for swift penetration into southern mountain districts. By 2008 the M29 road across the North Caucasus plain from Rostov-on-Don via Tikhoretsk and Nevinnomysk to Pyatigorsk, and from there via Nalchik, Vladikavkaz and Groznyy to the Caspian, was known to Western journalists as 'Europe's Kidnap Highway' because of the violence that reigned in North Osetia – 'where the roads at night slip into the control of the local robber barons'. Since Russia's assault on of the Chechens,

> [t]his southern fringe of Russia is almost lawless. Government motorcades are ambushed, Russian soldiers are shot or abducted, blood feuds spill into every institution, weak ministers buy support from clan leaders. Houses are fire-bombed. Roving gangs of Russian security police snatch and torture suspects. Young Islamic thugs reply in kind. This is where the empire falls apart.[73]

The M29 possessed great strategic importance for the Moscow imperial government as the road by which the threat of military force could be brought to bear on the Caucasian countries – as it had been in Chechenia.

Russia's notorious propensity for espionage was demonstrated in 2006, when the Georgian authorities arrested seven Georgians for treason and four Russian military intelligence officers as spies. In exaggerated retaliation Putin recalled his ambassador from Tbilisi and flew eighty-four Russian diplomats and their families out. He also suspended all Russia's transport links with Georgia, prohibited the import of the popular Georgian mineral water Borzhomi, expelled 150 Georgians as illegal immigrants, targeted Georgian market traders in Russia and even ordered a hunt for school pupils with Georgian names.[74] As a British columnist commented, 'It is a measure of how far our expectations of Russia have dropped that the timing and extent of sanctions imposed against Georgia have gone largely unremarked. It is worth remembering that Russian spies have been trying to plot a coup in Georgia for more than a year.'[75] Saakashvili turned the accused Russian officers over to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as a goodwill gesture, commenting that 'The message of Georgia to our great neighbour Russia is: enough is enough. We want to have good relations…to have dialogue, but we can't be treated as some second-rate backyard to some kind of re-emerging empire…We want…to be part not of a world of intimidation, blackmail, bullying and pressure, but a world of civilised dialogue.'[76]

In 2007 Saakashvili himself was accused by his former defence minister, Iraḳli Okruashvili, and the media tycoon Badri P̣aṭarḳatsishvili, of having contacts in unsavoury circles and being involved in corruption and murder. These slanders led to mass demonstrations against Saakashvili in October--November, when the president's declaration of a state of emergency and deployment of riot police evoked accusations of using excessive force, and a prediction of 'authoritarianism'. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union only the larger Caucasian countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – had reclaimed the status of separate independent states, while the smaller ones in North Caucasus had been prevented from secession and remained within the Rossiyan Federation. This successor to 'Russia', with its capital in Moscow, continued to maintain armed forces in its colonial territories to assert its own ‘inalienable’ right of possession. Nevertheless, in the late twentieth century even Russia had grudgingly acknowledged the role of the United Nations and other international institutions founded with the aim of preventing aggression and war, and (nominally) submitted its own military potential to the rule of international law proclaimed in 1975 by the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Since about 1999, however, the Russian dictatorship had ceased to show much respect for such niceties, and arrogant attitudes had crept into politics and inter-ethnic and international relations. Russia's nationalist rulers still believed that Russia was not only big, but also ‘great’, and that by reason of its ‘greatness’ was justified in domineering over the non-Russian peoples who formed a large part of its continuing empire. The trouble is, however, that the ruling clique in the Kremlin, narrowly obsessed with ‘great Russia’, were believed to be very powerful and important – and therefore got away with bad behaviour, thumbing their noses at other countries and international law. As one American commentator put it: ‘Putin is a hooligan in the courtyard who is going around breaking windows’, to which Saakashvili responded, ‘There was nothing we could do to “provoke” the hooligan: he had chosen his victim.’[77] In fact his acts against other post-Soviet, ex-‘Russian’ states, such as Ukraine and Georgia, conformed to imperial Russian patterns.

The terms in which Putin's attitudes have been discussed here have been mild and hopeful of a serious change of heart in the Kremlin. However, a European Conference on Security Policy held in Munich in February 2007 brought a declaration by Putin, couched in terms of studied hostility to the West but aimed explicitly at the United States, of the way he and his entourage view Russia's relations with other nations, which was highly relevant to events eighteen months later in Georgia. According to Putin's gauche, rhetorically laboured harangue, it had been expected that world politics after the end of the Cold War would become ‘unipolar’ – meaning, as he explained, having the USA as its ‘one center of authority, one center of force…of decision-making…one master, one sovereign’, and ‘nothing in common with democracy’. Jumping from this to ‘unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions’, he asserted that nowadays there was ‘greater disdain for the basic principles of international law’ as ‘independent legal norms are…coming…closer to…one state's legal system’ – as ‘the United States has overstepped its national borders in every way’ – which ‘is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations’. (No examples are given.) ‘Putin is saying that we are at the outset of another world war… America is the aggressor country…the main threat to the security of the planet…[he] does not aim these words at America or Europe…[but] at the Arab world, at Africa, Asia and Latin America. He is telling them that America wants to tyrannize the planet “contrary to democracy”.’[78] According to another account of the occasion in a leading Russian newspaper, *Kommersant*, ‘It seems that Putin had been preparing for this moment his whole political life…and he wanted to vent his spleen…express the relationship he has developed with the Western world. He undoubtedly knew exactly what he was doing.’ ‘The end of the president's speech was met with weak applause…A question about human rights in Russia went unanswered.’[79]

Since Georgia became an independent state in April 1991 it had widened its horizons and taken a place among the nations of the world in ways which subjection to the Russian state had made impossible. Georgia quickly received diplomatic recognition from many other countries and in

March 1992 was accepted as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Thus Georgia, which on older maps was, like the Caucasus as a whole, assumed to belong to ‘Asia’, now began to appear as one of the countries of Europe (as did Turkey, with its aspiration to join the European Union). During 1992 Georgia also became a member of the United Nations and, having entered the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, signed up to the Partnership for Peace programme of the North Atlantic Trade Organization.[80]

The scheming by Putin's government to undermine Georgia's independence and territorial integrity employed various measures directed at different aspects of its statehood, including its geographical borders and governmental system. One disruptive ploy was the offer of Russian internal passports to every citizen of South Osetia and Abkhazia, even though they were already citizens of independent Georgia. The official pretext for this, according to Russia's minister of foreign affairs, S. V. Lavrov, was that,

> When the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia found itself in a very awkward position. Some 25 million people who used to be the citizens of the Soviet Union, overnight found that they [were] living in a foreign country. [So the] Parliament of the Russian Federation in 1991 adopted the law saying that whoever was a holder of a Soviet passport has the right to become a Russian citizen. And since about the same time the then Georgian President Mr Gamsakhurdia started his ‘Georgia for Georgians’ campaign and antagonized Ossetians, Adjarians, Abkhazians, they ran to Russia for passports, for citizenship.[81]

This evoked a paradoxical comment by an Arab writer: ‘Russia has just invented a new kind of state: one in which the land is supposedly independent but the inhabitants are citizens of another country…In Abkhazia, Russian passport-holders account for 90% of the estimated 200,000 inhabitants. Another 5% are Georgians…In other words, in the newly independent republic of Abkhazia there are no Abkhazians. A similar situations obtains in South Osetia.’ He considers that Russia concocted this scheme in order to ‘signal her return as a major power that regards the Caucasus as part of its fortifications’ and to punish Georgia for seeking a special relationship with the USA by sending 3,000 troops to Iraq, applying to join NATO, hosting an American military mission and applying for membership of the European Union. It also wants to penalize Georgia for providing an alternative pipeline route to link the resources of the Caspian basin to world markets via the Black Sea ‘in defiance of Russia's strategy of controlling all pipelines to Europe’.[82]

Anti-government demonstrations occurred in Georgia in October 2007 as a result of accusations made against Saakashvili by his former friend and colleague, Irakli Okruashvili, of the president's involvement in corruption and murder. On 2 November this brought a political crisis to Tbilisi, when a crowd of some 50,000 gathered outside the parliament building. Some were openly pro-Russian, and Saakashvili spoke of ‘high-ranking officials of Russia's security services’ plotting a coup d’état. After six tense days the president declared a state of emergency and called in Georgia's security police to disperse the crowd with tear gas and rubber bullets. Another person involved in this crisis was Badri Patarkatsishvili, the Georgian Jewish multi-millionaire and former close business partner of Boris Berezovskiy (they had started off together as importers of foreign cars). P̣aṭarḳatsishvili, who flew in from London to a hero's welcome by the assembled demonstrators, reacted strongly against Saakashvili's dictatorial dispersal of the peaceful demonstrators and considered challenging Saakashvili by standing for president himself. However, it was Saakashvili who was re-elected as president in January 2008.[83] Okruashvili (who had formed his own anti-Saakashvili party) was arrested for bribery, extortion, money-laundering and abuse of office. He then withdrew his accusations of Saakashvili and (having paid 10,000,000 Georgian lari for bail and $6,000,000 as surety) fled to political asylum in France.[84] P̣aṭarḳatsishvili also faced accusations of shady financial dealings involving millions of dollars, and of implication in ‘several notorious murders in Russia and Georgia’. The truth may never be known as he himself died suddenly, but apparently from natural causes, at his English mansion in Surrey in February 2008.[85]

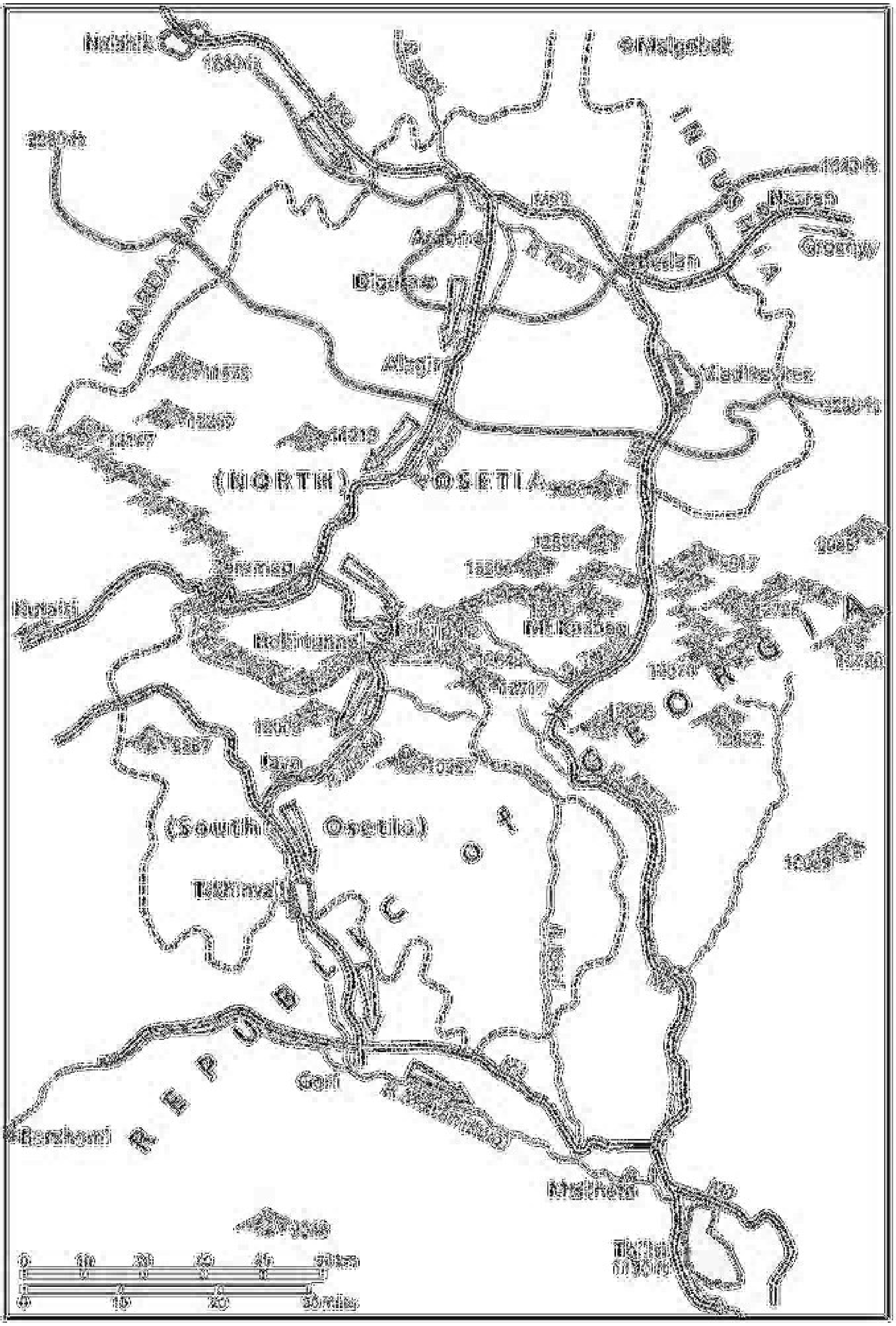
In 2008 Putin's government decided to invade Georgia on the pretext that the Osetian inhabitants of *Georgia*'s ‘South Osetian Autonomous Province’ – now ostensibly ‘Russian citizens’ as they had been given Russian passports – were being terrorized by the Georgians. It was a fact that for some time the ‘South Osetians’ and their Georgian neighbours in Tskhinvali district had been in a state of intermittent village warfare. Violence had often recurred ever since December 1990, when Gamsakhurdia's Georgian government, perceiving Russia's intention of annexing ‘South Osetia’ to the Russian Federal Republic, rescinded the autonomy of the South Osetian Autonomous Province (an integral part of the Georgian Republic) and then abolished it, causing a civil war, with the participation of Russian security troops. In December 1993 Gamsakhurdia had also brought Georgia's relations with Abkhazia to a state of war – which festered on into the next decade. According to Anatol Lieven, ‘The crude chauvinism of Georgian attitudes to the Abkhaz and other minorities was largely responsible for encouraging separatist movements, not just in Abkhazia but in…South Osetia, which after a short but bitter war effectively broke away from Georgia.’[86] An article in a Daghestani magazine by two Osetian writers presented an emotional account of ‘the tragic history of the South Osetians, against whom the Georgian Nazis have twice launched their genocidal policy: first in 1920, when over 70,000 Osetians fled…to North Osetia, and several thousand died; the second time, since 1990, when hundreds of Osetians were killed, thousands…wounded, and more than 105,000 sought refuge in North Osetia’.[87]

The Georgians, having treated the Osetians in their designated autonomous province within Georgia so badly, would have had to work very hard to regain the confidence or respect of their formerly friendly neighbours if they had been so inclined, but unfortunately many Georgians appear not to think that Gamsakhurdia or his policies should be criticized. Presumably it was because he promoted Georgian patriotism in defiance of the Russian communist régime's campaign against nationalism that the Georgian people respected Gamsakhurdia's own Georgian nationalist (and frequently racist) propaganda. It is improbable that the Russians – who generally took little interest in the non-Russian peoples of the empire – cared much about the Osetians and their problems, except as a political element useful to them for putting pressure on the Georgians.

During the last years of the USSR and the early decades of post-communist liberation, as many similar ethnic antagonisms and grudges came to the surface, skirmishing began to occur in the Georgian Republic between communities of Georgians and their non-Georgian neighbours, often involving killings and the incidental plundering of each other's belongings. The situation in Abkhazia before serious civil war began in the early 1990s was described by a Russian eyewitness: ‘The main goal of the [Russian] military “peace-keepers” was the surrender of every weapon. But how could these be surrendered when armed groups of Kartvelians were on the loose?…[However,] the presence of the military…rendered impossible unopposed raiding by groups of any size.’[88] He traces the stages of ‘criminalization’ among rural Georgians from the formation of small armed groups, based in villages, which staged sporadic attacks serious enough to sustain fear among the Abkhazians, but small enough to avoid alerting the soldiers. The chessboard pattern of Abkhazian and Georgian settlements was conducive to this. Social misfits such as freed convicts were ideal material for such bands, which suddenly attacked Abkhazian houses, subjecting their inhabitants to beatings, but more often threats. Popkov continues: ‘I…feel I can form an opinion of the moods and thoughts of the local people. “We want to live at peace”, they all aver. “What happened was madness…We are bound together not just by ties of neighbourliness, but of blood… We ordinary people should get on with tilling the soil and earning our bread…This has all been stirred up by the authorities.” But at the same time the Abkhazians were convinced that, whatever anyone says, it was the Kartvelians who started it, acting as the tools of those who hope, with their assistance, to “realise their anti-Soviet ambitions for the foundation of a single indivisible Georgia outside the USSR”…[while] the Kartvelians are convinced that the Abkhazians are to blame.’[89]

The Russo-Georgian war

In South Osetia too the Osetians and Georgians blamed each other for starting the fighting. The real culprit, however, was the Russian government, with its notorious propensity to create and distort events for propaganda purposes. It obscured the facts and precise timetable of the start of Russia's war on the sovereign state of Georgia via its enclave of South Osetia, and its propaganda imputing the blame to Georgia was strident – and widely repeated by the Western media (see Map 31).


Nalchik
1640 ft
Malgobek
2280 ft
KABARDA-BALKARIA
INGUSHETIA
1640 ft
Nazran
Grozny
Ardon
R. Terek
Beslan
Digora
Alagir
Vladikavkaz
2280 ft
(NORTH) OSETIA
Kutaisi
Roki tunnel
Mt Kazbeg
12717
Java
(South Osetia)
Tskhinvali
REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA
Gori
Borzhomi
Mtskheta
Tbilisi
0 10 20 30 40 50 km
0 10 20 30 miles

Map 31 Russia's assault on Georgia in August 2008, showing the terrain and roads north and south of the mountain boundary separating Russia's North Caucasian and ‘Transcaucasian’ colonies. This geographical divide provided President Putin of the Russian Republic with a pretext for invading the Georgian republic, governed by President Saakashvili. While the Osetians living within the Russian (or ‘Rossiyan’) state have a homeland enjoying the status of ‘autonomous republic’, and commonly known as ‘North Osetia’, there also exists within the re-established sovereign state of Georgia an area known under communism as ‘the South Osetian Autonomous Province’, where Osetians from the north had long been accepted as settlers (until the attack on it by Georgia's nationalist ruler Zviad Gamsakhurdia in 1990–2). This ‘South Osetia’ was seized by Putin for the ‘Rossiyan Republic’ in a ruthless invasion, including more than 800 tanks and other armoured vehicles – an operation demanding considerable planning for the movement of large military convoys from the M29 highway south to the natural barrier of the Great Caucasus range, rising from 500 metres (1,640 feet) in the Terek plain to 2,995 metres (9,820 feet) at the Roḳi tunnel. This is flanked on the west and east by many mountains over 12,000 feet, with Elbrus (18,506 feet) 87 miles to the west, and Mount Kazbegi (16,508 feet) 29 miles to the east.

What became clear was that during the night of 7–8 August 2008 (about 1–2 a.m.) ‘a large column of Russian tanks’, armoured personnel carriers and artillery passed through the Roḳi tunnel from North Osetia into South Osetia and proceeded to take it over. Shortly before daybreak local people were wakened by multiple explosions as Katyusha and Grad (Hail) multiple rockets were fired – at what targets, and by whom, was unknown. The assumption declared by the Russians, and echoed elsewhere, was that this was

Georgians bombarding Osetian villages.[90] On 22 August an American commentator wrote: ‘The jury is still out on who started this conflict…It is not clear who provoked who…[but] it took the Russian military 12 hours to respond.’[91] Thereafter, the idea of a Russian ‘response’ to supposed Georgian aggression became popular, e.g. ‘In the night before August 8, when Georgian forces launched a surprise attack on South Ossetia…three artillery shells tore off the roof…of [Valentina's] house…Moscow came to the aid of the South Ossetians. With their concentrated military might the Russians repelled the Georgian troops from Tskhinvali.’[92] Similarly, on Friday, 8 August ‘shortly before dawn, they were woken by explosions [as] the Georgians attacked Tskhinvali…Russia's response to the crisis was swift. Tank columns from the 58th Army rolled across the border into South Ossetia.’[93] However, the dramatic scenario of Russian tanks entering South Osetia as late as daybreak, racing in to protect the helpless Osetians, was absolutely untrue, as they had crossed the Russian–Georgian frontier very soon after midnight. The picture of such a swift ‘response’ raises the question ‘Where were these tanks coming from?’, and this question demands some consideration of the nature of the route from the Terek plain up the pass to the tunnel entrance – which is not like a quick afternoon pleasure trip. As the road from Alagir to the summit rises some 6,400 feet in approximately 55 miles, the journey is at least as arduous as a Swiss Alpine pass such as the Simplon or the St Gotthard, which also rise roughly 6,500 feet over a much longer distance of c. 90 miles from Milan to the summit. For an army convoy this could not be undertaken at short notice, but would take considerable time to prepare and accomplish.

In fact piecemeal troop movements to South Osetia through the tunnel had occurred long before then: 3 August had brought an intelligence battalion; the 5th, forty self-propelled guns and an infantry brigade. Meanwhile, the evacuation of Tskhinvali to provide space for assembling army vehicles had begun on 2 August.[94] The final stage in planning the invasion, indeed, had taken place as early as *3rd August* at a secret meeting in the small, much bombarded town of Tskhinvali (population less than 50,000), with Kokoyty, ‘the leader of the [Osetian] separatists’, M. Pankov, the Rossiyan Federation's deputy minister of defence, the commander of the 58th Army, the deputy head of military intelligence and ‘other senior persons’. ‘In addition the conference reviewed the plan for the next attack on Georgian villages, according to which, in the case of an Osetian separatist retreat, units of the Russian 58th Army were to advance into Tskhinvali district.’[95]

Another crucial fact about South Osetia which was ignored by most reporters was that ‘on Thursday night [7 August] Britain and the US blocked a Russian-sponsored UN resolution that called for an immediate end to bloodshed in Georgia–South Ossetia. [The Western] diplomats pointed out that the proposal prejudiced Georgia's sovereignty over South Ossetia, and should describe South Ossetia as a “region of Georgia”’[96] – a fundamental fact in the situation which all too few commentators acknowledge. According to another newspaper, ‘War began on August 7, when Georgia attacked Russian-backed separatists in Tskhinvali…Russia responded by sending troops into South Osetia…and then driving deeper into Georgia.’[97] This is nonsense because, as we have seen above, the Russians were already well on their way *as planned*, via the Roki tunnel and the road to Tskhinvali, and were committed to infringing Georgia's sovereignty. Equally superficial was a glib account praising Putin as a skilful chess-player whose brutality in disabling Georgia was ‘brilliant’, and belittling Saakashvili because he did not always get everything right and only ruled a small country (not a huge one capable of ruthlessly annihilating the Chechen people).[98] Another extremely important fact about the Russian invasion which is often ignored is that it followed immediately after the North Caucasus Military District's manoeuvres held on 15 July–2 August 2008, when the massive assemblage of forces involved, instead of dispersing to their bases, remained in North Osetia awaiting further orders.[99] By 5 August a huge concentration of Russian forces was massed at Lower Zaramag, some 12 miles north of the tunnel, including some 11,700 men, 891 armoured vehicles and 138 artillery pieces.[100] Within a week these Russian forces moved across *the frontier of the Georgian state* as real warfare was begun in the latter's South Osetian enclave – not randomly, but entirely according to Moscow's plan.

Realizing that things were moving inexorably towards war, on 2 August Saakashvili's special representative for conflict resolution, T. Yakobashvili, had appealed to international organizations and Russia to co-operate in direct Georgian–Osetian negotiations to reduce tension in the conflict zone, and went to South Osetia to meet officials there – but the South Osetian leaders refused to meet him. The next day was even worse: the Russian media carried propaganda about the inevitability of war with Georgia, and South Osetia reported that Cossack and other volunteers eager to support the Russians were being mobilized in North Osetia.[101]

Many Western commentators had little idea of the geography of North Osetia and the Roki tunnel, which made

Russia's invasion of Georgia possible. The road that brought Russian tanks through Georgia's northern frontier was a branch off Russia's M29 trunk road, starting at Nalchik, whence alternative routes ran via Beslan eastward to Groznyy and the Caspian, or south through Vladikavkaz and the Russian Military Highway to Tbilisi (until the latter was closed arbitrarily by Moscow in June 2006).[102] A secondary road from Nalchik led south through the mountains toward the rugged Mamison pass (impassable for vehicles) via Ardon, Alagir and Mizur. It was near the latter that the extension of the road (an ordinary two-lane highway) leading into Georgia at over 9,800 feet through the Roki tunnel had been engineered (naturally, under the close surveillance of Moscow's KGB) and opened in 1985. Here Zviad Gamsakhurdia's perception had been correct: he found this development such a threat to Georgian independence that he attempted (unsuccessfully) to have the tunnel blown up in 1991. As passage through the tunnel was controlled by the North Osetian authorities, who exacted the toll on behalf of the government, it brought significant profit to their state coffers. It rapidly became a route for trade, largely illicit (notably in jewellery and stolen cars), and there was a flourishing narcotics racket in the hands of the Osetian mafia.[103] Those in Moscow who planned the tunnel, however, were soon to use it for its real purpose: the invasion of Georgia.

A good brief contemporary account of the invasion came from Georgia's minister of education and science, Ghia Nodia:

> The war was unexpected and anticipated at the same time…for months diplomats and analysts had talked about the danger of a major Russian–Georgian conflict

> around one or both of Georgia's…'frozen conflicts' in Abkhazia and South Ossetia…[O]n the Russian side the issue of South Ossetia in general [and the] 'protection' of Russian citizens residing there in particular – was simply a pretext…[But] the Georgian government also came under criticism for its alleged failure of judgment when the military attack to occupy Tskhinvali…was ordered in the early morning of 8 August 2008. It seems the Georgian government displayed political immaturity by falling into a Russian trap.[104]

In September a British journalist in Tbilisi reported that 'Mr Saakashvili remains adamant that he did not start the war. The Georgians are handing out evidence, including telephone intercepts, to show that large numbers of Russian troops entered South Ossetia through the Roki tunnel on August 7th, long before the Georgians began bombarding… Tskhinvali…He says he would welcome an inquiry into how the war began.'[105] According to Nodia,

> The escalation of violence in the days before 8 August demonstrated that what was on the Russians' mind was to wipe out the pro-Georgian enclave within South Ossetia, thus causing a serious humanitarian catastrophe. The news that, around midnight on 8 August, a large column of Russian tanks [and other military vehicles] had entered South Ossetia from the north…was the last straw: the [Georgian] decision to take control of Tskhinvali was a desperate attempt to pre-empt the large-scale Russian strike.

Even more interesting is Nodia's observation that

> the most telling illustration of what the Russians are doing in Georgia was…found in the pocket of a Russian airman downed by the Georgian air defence: an obscene verse…[about] Russian troops humiliating Nato soldiers. Whatever the humanitarian rhetoric, what Russia is really doing is a preventive strike against Nato…Moscow wants to teach Georgia a lesson for Tbilisi's open and defiant wish to become part of the west…[and to show] that it will not tolerate further encroachment on its zone of influence; it wants to make clear to neighbouring countries (Ukraine first of all) that they are in Russia's back yard and should behave accordingly…This is a war for the soul and identity of Georgia. Whatever the outcome in terms of territorial control or military-political arrangements, this war is one Georgia cannot afford to lose, and the west cannot afford to ignore.[106]

The first column of Russian armoured vehicles from North Osetia emerged from the Roki tunnel at 10.55 p.m. on 7 August 2008; by 2 a.m. five such columns had arrived and driven south towards Tskhinvali. The total number of tanks and other vehicles has been estimated variously as 3,000 or 5,500, and personnel between 40,000 and 80,000 – an invasion such as had not been seen in Georgia since the days of Shah Agha Mohammad of Iran (1742–57).[107]

The occupation of Georgia which followed the initial assault was a further exhibition of the bad faith of Russia's rulers, as their troops demonstratively breached the terms of the ceasefire which had been negotiated a few hours earlier by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy (who naively believed that the Russians would comply with it).[108] On Wednesday, 13 August, a column of tanks, armoured cars and personnel carriers appeared on the main Tbilisi–Kutaisi road and set up a checkpoint on the approaches to Gori (population 62,000 in 1987). The barrier was manned by renegade Chechens from Kadyrov's puppet state – no doubt to strike fear into the hearts of the Georgians. This made nonsense of the ceasefire ‘deal’. Georgian troops had abandoned Gori hastily on Monday night, but now there were ‘prolonged bursts of gunfire’ in the town. ‘Then, suddenly, a convoy of about 70 Russian military vehicles… loaded with soldiers and [South Osetian] irregulars…began to pour out of Gori and head towards Tbilisi’, which lay 40 miles to the east. After 10 miles they turned off the main road and halted, while some 6 miles further on Georgian soldiers were ‘hurriedly establishing artillery positions to stop their advance’.[109] Meanwhile the Russians began a savage programme of aerial bombardment in Gori – including the use of illegal fragmentation shells to cause maximum destruction and death. Notwithstanding the danger, President Saakashvili visited the town and experienced a threatening low-level swoop by a Russian aircraft.[110]

Putin's swashbuckling, but surreptitious, display of brute strength against Saakashvili gave much cause for thought in the North Atlantic countries: ‘By launching its first invasion of a foreign country since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia jeopardised its status as a rational actor on the world stage.’[111] As one report demonstrated, Putin showed his naivety or hypocrisy by falling for the politician's stock photo opportunity – being photographed stroking the head of a young South Osetian boy cradled in his mother's arms (as if the creation of refugees were not a routine matter for a Russian who had presided over the final stages of the Chechen war). At the same time, Putin was indulging in serious warfare against Georgia – ‘a fight he has been savouring for some time’ – merely to pretend that the

Caucasus is ‘Russia's backyard’. He also appeared to believe that the USA's aim in enlarging NATO (for instance, by admitting Georgia as a member) was to ‘encircle Russia’ – obviously a ludicrous aim in geographical terms.[112]

Of the numerous opinions on the Russo-Georgian war offered by contemporary Western commentators, many betrayed more haste than knowledge, and revealed little interest in Caucasian countries for their own sake, while indulging a tradition of sympathy and respect towards Russia, irrespective of the war crimes its recent régimes have perpetrated. For instance, ‘Seizing the opening offered by…Saakashvili's doomed military incursion…Moscow…insisted the Georgian leader should resign.’ This implies that the person behind the conflict was the Georgian president – although it was literally impossible for him to make an ‘incursion’ into South Osetia when that territory was an integral part of the state of Georgia, which is Saakashvili's home, and of which he is the head. Further: ‘Russia's prime minister, Vladimir Putin, who has taken charge [NB!] of the crisis…visited refugees in hospitals in Vladikavkaz, and said 22,000 had crossed into Russia.’ Putin can hardly be said to have stepped in and ‘taken charge of the crisis’, when it was he who had caused the crisis by colluding with the South Osetian national separatists (not to forget the ‘government’ of North Osetia, whose territory was used as the invasion route) in creating a major political crisis by sending a large ‘Rossiyan Federation’ army to invade without warning (!) the independent state of Georgia. Even more heinous was the purpose of this army: to force Georgia to surrender to those ‘separatists’ the Osetian enclave which lay within its borders, and whose secession would create for Georgia the impossible situation of having a politically separate enclave – oriented not on what had been for long its host country, but on its Osetian ‘brother country’ immediately to the north and on the explicitly unfriendly Russia. Finally, considering that Abkhazia, egged on by Russia, had been at war for years with its legitimate political overlord, Georgia, how could 'Russian officials reject claims that Moscow was trying to widen the conflict into Georgia's other breakaway region of Abkhazia'? The Russian capital had succeeded in doing that long ago![113]

Georgia and the wider world

Putin's invasion of Georgia in 2008 was the latest turn in the chronic contention between Georgia and Russia which had begun in December 1991 when, after the dissolution of the USSR, Yeltsin immediately attempted to replace it with a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), formed by twelve of the former Soviet republics. Georgia did eventually join them in 1993, because Shevardnadze hoped that Moscow would co-operate in resolving the conflict over Abkhazia by a compromise which would persuade it to remain within the Georgian Republic. However, it was not Russia's intention to let this come under discussion, even if the Abkhazians could be persuaded to 'return' to a Georgia which had tried to relegate them to the status of an uncivilized tribe. In any case, Russia incited Abkhazian separatism as part of its plan to obstruct unification in the Caucasus and keep it within its empire as a whole. Meanwhile Georgia itself was in a state of violent transition, as Gamsakhurdia was deposed in January 1992 after causing much strife. In March 1992 a provisional government of Georgia was created and, despite Shevardnadze's becoming acting chairman of its State Council, a civil war broke out. It was in this context that Georgia began its liberation from the Russian empire, being admitted to the United Nations Organization in July, as well as to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In addition, Georgia received $10 million in aid from United States and other international sources, and later it joined NATO's Partnership for Peace programme, to which, under the new Georgian Constitution, with Shevardnadze as president, it submitted its Individual Partnership Plan. Georgia's gradual induction into the Western international community continued in 1997, and soon relations were established with 110 foreign countries (a striking contrast with the very few republics of the CIS, apart from Russia itself, which were permitted to conduct any international relations on their own behalf). Further perspectives opened before Georgia, including proposals for a unified pan-European transport region and, specifically, a new 'silk road' or Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor.[114]

Unfortunately, however eager Georgia may be to take its place among other European countries, according to Ghia Nodia:

> Despite Georgia's geo-politically strategic location on the Black Sea, bordering Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkey – and on a key trade route between the European Union, Iran, Russia, and Central Asia – Europe has dragged its feet on the country's most enduring political problems…[including] military and energy security, and the Kremlin-backed breakaway Abkhazia and South Osetia regions…Georgia signed an agreement on an EU–Georgian European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan (ENP) in November 2006…[which] puts relations between Georgia and the EU on a higher level, but what are the chances that the resulting expectations will be met? The ENP comes a poor second to co-operation with NATO as a priority for Georgia, in part because Georgians,

> feeling threatened by Russia, crave security above all.[115]

Nodia concedes (as it happened, only seven months before Russia's invasion of his country) that ‘The Georgian government is impatient, and considers the unresolved [Abkhazia and South Osetia] conflicts as the principal threats to its security and impediment to its development. It expects bolder political moves from the EU.’ He correctly perceives the underlying reason for the weakness of the (far from united) European Union's response: ‘The EU has avoided any such gesture, seeking to avert another source of conflict with Russia.’ Writing in late 2007 at a time when Saakashvili's government, facing mass street protests, not only resorted to police action to quell them, but closed down the popular television company Imedi (‘Hope’) belonging to Patarkatsishvili, who was supposedly conspiring to bring down the government, Nodia wrote that ‘The current crisis in Georgia has exposed the structural weaknesses of Georgian democracy, and came as a shock to many who held exaggerated expectations of the 2003 “Rose Revolution”.’[116]

In any case, Georgia continued to press its case for membership of NATO. Official relations had been initiated in 1998 by Georgia's opening a diplomatic mission in Washington and presenting an ambassador. In 2001 the first joint US–Georgia manoeuvres were held in Poti and, after US instructors were seconded to Tbilisi, in 2003 Georgia began to contribute troops to the international coalition contingents on ‘police duty’ in Iraq, with a force of 850 men. When their number was increased to 1,200 in 2007 this made Georgia's contingent the third largest in the coalition army, after the American and British contingents.[117] Russia's invasion of Georgia in August 2008 was a crude reaction against Georgia's independent involvement in international military affairs and negotiations with Washington about membership of NATO.[118]

In recent years the Anglophone press has adopted a rather shallow cliché to describe or justify the Russian government's bad behaviour in Georgia and the Caucasus in general – that Russia looks upon the Caucasus as 'its own backyard'. This indulgent phrase is quite harmful, as it panders to Moscow's assumption, inherited from the Bolsheviks and White Russians, and obviously believed by Vladimir Putin, that it possesses a right to interfere in, or occupy, the Caucasus, with no other sanction than military power and ruthlessness in employing it. The phrase also belittles the region and its frequently decisive role as a battlefield in historical events in the much wider field of the Middle East.

It was not even supremacy in warfare that had given Russia power over the Caucasus, but insidious fostering of the superficial links between Russia and Georgia – the Orthodox Church, and in North Caucasus a few distant connections with ruling families in Circassia, including the dynastic marriage in the sixteenth century between Ivan the Terrible and Maria Temryuk. Otherwise, since the late eighteenth century Russia had simply walked into Georgia at will, behaving diplomatically enough to make a couple of treaties with Georgian kings – then, as soon as the way looked clear in the nineteenth century, switching to brazen force and the ruthless subjection not only of brother Christians, but also of the Muslim peoples of Daghestan and Chechenia. Only Armenia has not felt the harshness of Russian colonial rule, as St Petersburg was able to exploit Armenia's exposed and isolated position (the Georgians having never made common cause with these nearest, also Christian, neighbours) and draw it into the ‘sphere of influence’ of Russia by giving it ‘protection’ – which unfortunately did Armenia little good when Turkey got into its nationalistic stride in the early twentieth century, but was maintained by Russia to ensure the adhesion of this country too to its empire.

Meanwhile, in 2009, a year after the Russians invaded Georgia, they still refused to withdraw their troops and close down their military bases in South Caucasia; nor had they resolved the conundrum they created by encouraging the South Osetian separatist movement to the extent of redefining its constitutional position from a small ethnic territory within and subordinate to Georgia, to the same territory, still located within Georgia, but now of higher political status, and in practice subordinated not to Georgia but to Russia, which so far has not withdrawn its troops from Georgian territory. That withdrawal would be an important gain for the civilized world, permitting Georgia and other Caucasian lands to develop free from Russian interference, enjoying Western modernization and their natural advantages of climate and landscape which could be great assets to the tourist industry.

Such political coherence as the Caucasus ever possessed had been thoroughly disrupted by Russian rule since the eighteenth century. In the Kuban plain and the foothills of the Great Caucasus the autochthonous inhabitants of Circassian (Adyg) stock survive only as Muslim remnants among a growing mass of urbanized Russian immigrant population, particularly in Stavropol province. Their original neighbours to the east around the river Terek – the Ingush and Chechens – having been swamped by the Russian immigrants of Groznyy and the petroleum industry, and in recent decades massacred by Moscow's ruthless militarism –

also lost out to the ‘loyal’ Osetian protégés of Russian imperial power in Vladikavkaz.

Mountainous Daghestan retains its multi-ethnic diversity but, since Russia's nineteenth-century genocide of the Avars and Chechens, has also lost much of its specific native culture and individuality, and has become a poor country. In the south its peoples are somewhat dominated by their Azerbaijani neighbours, who flourish, with much violence and corruption, on the international appetite for Baku oil. The peace between the Azerbaijani Turks and the Armenians is fragile, especially in Mountain Karabagh, which is in the hands of the hard-fighting Armenians. To the west the latter have nevertheless come to a modus vivendi with the Turks of Anatolia, despite the shadow of the early twentieth-century genocide, for which Turkey refuses to admit responsibility on their ancestors’ part.

Somewhat similarly, the Moscow government fails to acknowledge that Russia has no divine right to possess, or dominate, any part of the Caucasus – nor, indeed, Central Asia, Ukraine or many other parts of the former Russian Empire/Soviet Union – as these too are the results of colonial wars of conquest during the last three centuries. For Russian nationalists, the elimination of the khanates of Astrakhan (1556) and Crimea (1783), and the conquests on the Volga and Don by Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great – forming a border guarded by Russia's fortress of Tsaritsyn/Volgograd (1589) at the near-confluence of the two rivers – are almost sacred and not subject to second thoughts, especially as they led to Russia's conquest of the Caucasus. The earliest Russian towns here, such as Yekaterinodar, Vladikavkaz, Stavropol, Georgiyevsk, and Holy Cross (later ‘Budyonnovsk’, were founded between 1784 and 1799. Two hundred years later the conspicuous representative of alien power in

Caucasia, Russia, is apparently determined to hold on to all the colonies between Volgograd and Krasnodar seized by its imperialist predecessors. Although the passage of time may seem to have lent some justification to the Russians' claim to the lands of North Caucasus, those living to the south-east of the Don–Volga line are clearly intruders of relatively recent standing, but they so swiftly appropriated the rich black-earth expanses of the North Caucasus plain, from the Don to Stavropol, and peopled them with Russian and Ukrainian settlers, that these steppes have become an important part of Russia's agriculture, especially since Ukraine's attainment of independence in 1991 deprived Russia of the produce of the Ukrainian 'breadbasket'. Theoretically, it would be appropriate if the Russians moved out to the north of the Don–Volga line, to become neighbours of the Kalmyk–Mongolian Republic – a large area of the pre-Caucasus which already has autonomy as part of the Rossiyan Republic. This Don–Volga line would then be the clear northern limit of the independent Caucasus.

Notoriously, however, Russian rulers, being at the political level of nineteenth-century imperialists, resent the loss of any territory that has once been under the Russian flag, and are poised to take it back again if an opportunity arises. Whether Moscow would ever willingly relinquish its grip on the North Caucasus plain from the Sea of Azov to northern Chechenia therefore remains doubtful.

The world's attention in recent years has been drawn to the Georgians, whose eager contacts with the USA and willingness to lend active support to Western forces in the Middle East and Afghanistan (where many of their ancestors fought long ago as soldiers of the shahs of Persia) might lead to close association with America and the European Union. Because of half-acceptance by North America and Europe of the lazy concept of the Caucasus as Russia's ‘backyard’, public condemnation of the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia was muted at first, but this changed as the dignity of President Saakashvili's leadership emerged, as did reports of Russian crudity. The generosity of US support and supplies and their firm diplomatic line with the Putinists also brought much relief, with indications of further collaboration from the West.

Georgia too had shown generosity by the scale of its contribution to the coalition force in Iraq and its willingness to contribute to wider NATO/UN commitments. Georgian troops had been serving in Iraq since August 2003 – initially only 79 men; in 2004 already 800; then by June 2007, 2,000 – at first in non-combatant roles in Baghdad and Ba'qubah, then at al-Kut on the Iranian border to combat weapons smuggling.[119] By March 2008 Tbilisi had offered NATO 500 more troops to boost the coalition's hard-pressed multi-national force in Afghanistan.[120] Russia's invasion of Georgia in August, however, made it necessary to bring the Georgian contingent back from Iraq to the homeland, in transport provided by the US Air Force.[121]

This led to a display of astonishing ineptitude on Putin's part: he ‘accused the United States of adding to the chaos in Georgia by airlifting its troops serving in Iraq. Mr Putin said the US move would hamper efforts to solve the conflict over South Ossetia.’ He continued his naive accusation, referring to the Americans obliquely in characteristically coy Russian euphemism: ‘It's a pity that some of our partners, instead of helping, are in fact trying to get in the way…I mean…the United States airlifting Georgia's military contingent from Iraq effectively into the conflict zone.’ He even resorted to a childish tit-for-tat accusation: ‘The scale of their cynicism causes surprise…the ability to cast white as black and black as white…the ability to cast the aggressor as the victim and blame the victims for the consequences.' This reference to a practice in which Putin himself was adept must refer to the far from simple question of 'who fired first and committed the first atrocities' in the Russian/South Osetian versus Georgian war.[122]

The Caucasus and the Middle East

South of the Araxes and the mountainous Caucasian lands, in the great plain of the Euphrates–Tigris rivers and the deserts beyond, the countries of the Middle East have not required much direct mention in this book. The ancient cultural and trading contacts between Caucasians and the Arabic-speaking countries – Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Arabia – do not play an essential part in Caucasian life and economy now that the once ubiquitous camel caravans no longer utilize the caravansarais along the routes to Byzantium and eastern Europe. In the twentieth century the Caucasus was doubly cut off from contact with the Middle East: in the first place, by the closely guarded Soviet Russian frontier with Turkey and Iran, stretching for over 1,000 miles from the mountains of Georgia and Armenia in the west along the river Araxes, and beyond this the remote lowlands and mountains of the Talysh region on the Caspian. Beyond Turkey and Iran in the south the Syrian desert and Iraqi plain lay open (and well-nigh roadless) for 500 miles towards Egypt and Saudi Arabia – a world in which Islam prevails, and since the 1940s the Arab countries have cast off the rule of Britain and France and in a series of wars and civil wars become independent states.

The most radical innovation was the takeover of 'British' Palestine by Jews escaping from Nazi German tyranny in central Europe, and their establishment in 1948 of the new state of Israel, which drew immigrants from all over the world. The Caucasus under Russian communist dictatorship remained largely aloof from these Middle Eastern leagues, conflicts and regroupings – while Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Iran and Egypt on their part paid little attention to the tribulations of the peoples of the USSR. However, the Soviet Russian state did not ignore the Middle East: its diplomats and agents sought to increase their influence on Iran and Turkey as the Cold War developed from the 1950s. One aspect of Soviet policy that Middle Eastern governments did support was 'the Arab case against Israel', which 'in turn led the US to enter into a new and closer strategic relationship with Israel, of which it became the principal source of diplomatic, strategic, and in time also financial support'.[123]

Meanwhile the deadly force of fundamentalist Islam and anti-Westernism[124] to some extent percolated northward and found disciples among the Daghestanis and Chechens, a few of whom carried their anti-intellectual convictions and suicidal hatred into the metropolis of their enemy in the north, Moscow – quickly generating among the Russians equally indiscriminate hatred and violence against black-haired men from the south. On the other hand, Georgia's President Saakashvili, far from manifesting the anti-Semitism of some Europeans, found common ground with the Israelis – among whom there are thousands of Jews from Soviet Georgia who emigrated to Israel in the 1980s – and established official contacts by visiting Jerusalem in 2004.[125]

The history of any part of the former Russian Empire/Soviet Union, even twenty years after its many subject peoples broke it up by asserting their will for self-determination, still presents the choice between a Russophile point of view that supports ‘the Russians’ whatever their government does, or an anti-imperialist view which supports the case of the non-Russian peoples, in the belief that they deserve at least as much respect as the ‘great’ Russian nation which for so long dominated and repressed them, and that they, no less than such (‘greater’?) nations, also have a right to rule themselves. The common alternative to this principle is generally sentimental dramatization of the ostensible plight of the Russian people as an exceptional case. For example:

> the Soviet Union fell apart…Once it had disappeared, the amalgam of nations and territories it had held together had nothing more to unite them except a historical legacy they were all anxious to be rid of. The real tragedy was that of the Russian people, scattered throughout an empire which they had conquered and ruled over for four hundred years. Upwards of twenty-five million Russians found themselves aliens on territory which they had been accustomed to regard as their homeland, facing resentment, discrimination and even violence from their newly enfranchised neighbours.[126]

Unfortunately, this view and its corollary that the Russian state has a right and an obligation to step in to ‘protect’ its former emigrants and indigenous allies (such as the Osetians) in what it became fashionable to call Russia's ‘near abroad’ was a political position regarding the former Russian Empire which precisely suited Putin's plans.

Meanwhile his government continued its cold-blooded persecution of some of Russia's most upright people –

activists for human rights and the rehabilitation of children traumatized by the war against the Chechens, or who were dedicated to exposing the political corruption and mockery of democracy in rigged elections, the thwarting of any new political movements, and the murder to order of activists like themselves. Equally sordid were attempts to justify Russia's invasion and undermining of the Georgian state, using the calculated strategies of many years – in particular the corrupt seduction of the pseudo-governments of Abkhazia and South Osetia as pawns to undermine Georgia's defences. So vulnerable to such scheming were the nations of North Caucasus that the future of the whole region was threatened by the régime in Putin's 'United Russia'.

In the early 1990s – when practically all the non-Russian countries in the USSR began to break free from the shackles of Russian imperialism – there was speculation about how long it would take for Russia itself to metamorphose into a democratic, demilitarized open society with a free market, efficient modernized industrial management and trustworthy civil institutions, including a fairly elected parliament. Ten years later, although everyday life had become freer and more prosperous for many citizens, none of these radical institutional changes had materialized, because of the lingering resistance of communist habits. Vladimir Putin, chosen arbitrarily by President Yeltsin as his successor, was appointed head of the latest version of the secret police, and on Yeltsin's retirement in 2000 was – in accordance with the new Russian Federation constitution of December 1993 ('imposed…by methods involving electoral fraud')[127] – immediately elevated, without any election, to the presidential throne.[128]

These anti-democratic rearrangements had drastic consequences for the peoples of the Caucasus. On spurious grounds of self-defence strategy Moscow, until Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991, had considered the Black Sea as a Russian lake. Even after that, Russia, as well as occupying the Crimean port of Sevastopol (which now lay in Ukraine), retained a naval presence along the east coast of the Sea of Azov from Rostov to Taman, continuing along the Black Sea coast for 200 miles to Novorossiysk, Tuapse and Sochi. From here to the south-east the next 200 miles of Black Sea coast, from the river Psou to Batumi, officially belongs to Georgia, but since the 1989 Abkhazian National Convention at Lykhny – when Russia's intrigues and half-concealed military intervention began – has been usurped, supposedly on behalf of the Abkhazians, by Moscow. The Abkhazians’ position between Russia and Georgia is dangerous because, however nationalistic the Georgians may have been in relations with their neighbours, the Russians can be far more unscrupulous, as their invasion of Georgia in August 2008 demonstrated.

With Putin's troops still occupying much of Georgia in October 2009, and no indication of the aggressors preparing to withdraw, the prospects of a peaceful conclusion and Georgia's release from the insolence of the Russian army of occupation seemed remote. The only glimmer of hope against the threat from the north that Caucasia received came, unexpectedly, from Moscow in October 2009, with the re-emergence in politics of the hero of Russia's attempted renovation in the 1980s – Mikhail Gorbachov. In an interview in October 2009 in Moscow's influential *Novaya gazeta*, the former president of the Soviet Union exposed the attitude prevailing in Russia to the existing political situation, condemning Rossiya's recent elections as a mockery of democracy because the Russian parliament, in which the president's party, United Russia, held 300 out of the 450 seats, was ‘entirely controlled by Mr Putin’ and colluded in falsifying the recent regional election results, so that United Russia ‘won almost 80% of seats in the regional elections, and 32 of the 35 places on the Moscow City Council’.[129] (This was scarcely news, as the corrupt conduct of Russia's elections, in which United Russia always wins, had not changed since they were inaugurated by Yeltsin in 2000.)

It is perhaps unlikely that the octogenarian Gorbachov, who credits Putin with ‘having brought stabilization to Russia’, and believes he ‘has the support of 80% of the population’, would stimulate an open revolt against the current régime. Nor is he, with his North Caucasian origins (he is a descendant of Cossack peasant farmers of Stavropol province,[130] who in 1970 had become First Secretary of Stavropol Regional Committee of the KPSS) and a safe career in the regional Communist Party, likely to protest much about Russia's invasion of Georgia. But neither is he alone in criticizing the present Kremlin leadership. In an interview in *The Times* in September 2009 Gorbachov referred to a protest staged in the Moscow Duma by 150 deputies of the Communist, Liberal Democrat and ‘A Just Russia’ parties (Spravedlivaya Rossiya), who walked out of the chamber in October 2009 in protest against the latest elections, in which United Russia received 90% of the ballot. According to *The Times*, ‘the Duma protest is the most serious challenge faced by President Medvedev [Putin's pseudo-successor] since he took office…The Kremlin is nervous about potential public unrest as Russians feel the effects of the global economic crisis.’ Meanwhile Gorbachov attacked United Russia as a ‘party of bureaucrats’ and ‘the worst version of the Soviet Communist Party’ and said that the Russian parliament and courts ‘lacked independence’.[131]

Those who respect Georgia's efforts to establish true independence, untrammeled by the arrogant assumptions and bullying of Russia's present rulers, can but hope that the route it has chosen to align itself with Western countries, via the USA and NATO, will lead to the peaceful withdrawal of the occupying forces from a situation where Russia neither belongs nor is capable of making any positive contribution to democratic government.

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[1] *The Times*, 19 June 1995, p. 11. Since the Russo-Chechen War some Western road maps state that the Caucasian Highway is 'closed to foreigners', but the Civil Georgia website on 9 June 2009 indicated that it may be open randomly, no doubt depending on the whim of the Russian authorities: www.civil.ge.

[2] The history of Suburban district was complicated, but the Ingush claim is strong. The Osetians' assertion that it belonged to their ancestors, the Alans, until the fourteenth century is spurious, as no historical evidence survives to subtantiate it. In the present account the next period specified is 'from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century until the late 1850s', when the Ingush homeland included what later became Suburban district. Thereafter until 1922 only Cossacks are mentioned (leaving the whereabouts of the Ingush unexplained); from 1922 until the 1944 deportation this became the Ingush AP within the Chechen-Ingush ASSR; thereafter it was added to the North Osetian ASSR. The only justification argued for Osetia's continued occupation of Suburban district was that on the Ingushes' return from exile, as compensation for the loss of Suburban district three districts of dry steppe north of the Terek (clearly less fertile than the land around Vladikavkaz)

were added to Chechenia-Ingushia: Dzadziyev and Gostiyeva, *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya*, p. 8.

[3] Sheehy, ‘Gorbachev proposes commission’, pp. 17–18.

[4] *Izvestiya*, 2 November 1992, p. 1; *Nezavisimay a gazeta*, 29 October 1992, p. 3, both in *CDSP*, vol. 14, no. 44, pp. 16–18; Jibladze, ‘Spotlight on Ingushetia’, pp. 27–30.

[5] Barsenkov, Koretskiy and Ostapenko, *Politecheskaya Rossiya segodnya*, [pt 2], pp. 17–19, 110–12; Birch, ‘Osetia: a Caucasian Bosnia’, pp. 64–5; ‘There is an Ingush Republic’, *CDSP*, 1992, vol. 44, no. 50, p. 28.

[6] D. J. Smith, *et al.*, ‘Beslan: the aftermath’, *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 5 Deecember 2004, pp. 33–4.

[7] *Daily Telegraph*, 19 June 1995, pp. xi, 1, 14, 22, 25; *The Times*, 19 June 1995, p. 11.

[8] *International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 1996, p. 7; *The Times*, 16 January 1996, pp. 1, 10; 17 January 1996, p. 10.

[9] Gall and de Waal, *Chechnya*, pp. 363–71; *The Economist*, 2 March 1996, p. 47.

[10] Comité Tchétchénie, *Tchétchénie*, pp. 127–8; ‘Death of mercy: massacre at School No. 1’, *The Sunday Times*, 5 September 2004, pp. 1, 15–18; S. Smith, ‘Caucasus caught in cycle of violence’, *The Times*, 6 September 2004, p. 9; D. J. Smith, ‘Beslan: the aftermath’.

[11] T. Halpin, ‘Botched raid led to Beslan deaths’, *The Times*, 31 July 2007, p. 33; J. Page, ‘Still they seek the victims of Beslan’, *The Times*, 17 September 2004, p. 17.

[12] Page, ‘Still they seek the victims of Beslan’; ‘Putin overture angers Beslan mothers’, *The Times*, 30 August 2005, p. 27; Halpin, ‘Botched raid led to Beslan deaths’.

[13] ‘Beslan welcomes two new schools’, BBC News Channel, 17 August 2005, news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4158622.stm; M. Franchetti, ‘Beslan pupils fall victim to Putin vendetta’, *The Sunday Times*, 26 March 2006.

[14] ‘Death of mercy’, p. 18.

[15] A. Politkovskaya, ‘Beslan ushers in Putin's new age of terror’, *The Sunday Times*, 17 October 2004; see also Politkovskaya, *A Russian Diary*, pp. 154–64, 168–82, 255.

[16] Politkovskaya, *A Russian Diary*, pp. 287, 289–90.

[17] J. Steele, ‘Angry Putin rejects public Beslan inquiry’, www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/sep/07/russia.chechnya.

[18] Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War*, pp. 287, 290.

[19] *Ibid*., pp. 59–64, 74–5, 147–62.

[20] *Ibid*., pp. 68–73, 132–5; photograph in *The Times*, 23 June 2004, p. 32.

[21] L. Fuller, ‘Ingushetia: militant attacks increase as cracks emerge within the leadership’, *RFE/RL*, 1 August 2007, www.rferl.org/content/article/1077922.html, p. 1.

[22] T. Parfitt, ‘Moscow's secret war in Ingushetia’, *Spectator*, 13 September 2008, p. 19; this article contains accounts of several frame-ups and brutal killings by the ‘security services’.

[23] Normally the civil police, not being soldiers, are not legitimate targets. But this was Russia, and an official report of the numbers of ‘Rossiyan forces’ in North Osetia at this time (totalling more than 11,000 men) made it clear that these included ‘5,954 Defence Ministry troops, 4,536 Internal Affairs [MVD] troops, and 745 Russian and North Osetian policemen’ – indicating that the Russian authorities perceived the civil police to be a military organization: *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1992, no. 46, p. 49.

[24] Ramdhan/Ramzan (i.e. ‘Ramadan’; see Ahmed, *Dictionary of Muslim Names*, p. 169) Kadyrov, called by Politkovskaya ‘half-witted’, was the son of Ahmad-Hajji Kadyrov, the mufti who had nominally ruled Chechenia on behalf of Putin until his assassination in May 2004: Politkovskaya, *Russian Diary*, pp. 115–16, 122.

[25] ‘And they call it peace’, *The Economist*, 1 March 2008, p. 43; Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War*, p. 255; Politkovskaya, *Russian Diary*, pp. 122–3.

[26] Fuller, ‘Ingushetia: militant attacks’, p. 1.

[27] L. Fuller, ‘Is Ruslan Aushev the answer to Ingushetia's problems?’, *RFE/RL*, 30 May 2008, www.rferl.org/content/article/1144524.html.

[28] T. Lokshina, ‘How Chechnya came to Ingushetia’, *Guardian Online*, 8 July 2008, www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/2008/07/08/russia19288_txt.htm.

[29] Parfitt, ‘Moscow's secret war’, p. 18.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 19.

[31] *Ibid*.

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 193.

[34] S. Smith, ‘Caucasus caught in cycle of violence’, *The Times*, 6 September 2004, p. 9.

[35] R. Boyes, ‘Revenge killer hailed as hero’, *The Times*, 29 August 2008, p. 37.

[36] *Istoriya Severo-Osetinskoy*, [vol. I], p. 9.

[37] Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 183.

[38] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, pp. 86–8.

[39] The total population was 98,527, including Osetians 65,232 (66.2%) and Georgians 28,544 (29.0%): Census 1989, Minneapolis, pt 1, Table 14, pp. 444, 466; *Pravda*, 29 April 1989, p. 2.

[40] Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, p. 88.

[41] V. Abayev, 'The tragedy of South Osetia: the way to agreement', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 22 February 1992, cited in Gachechiladze, *New Georgia*, pp. 86–7.

[42] Birch, 'Ossetia: a Caucasian Bosnia', p. 44.

[43] Similarly one-dimensional was the opinion of an earlier writer that 'The two Ossetin territories adjoin each other and it would have been logical to amalgamate them into a single Autonomous Republic', which suggests that he saw territories on a map as flat, and had no knowledge of the topographical relief and the real difficulties of movement which it imposes: Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, p. 191.

[44] Kalesnik, ed., *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Rossiyskaya Federatsiya. Yevropeyskiy Yugo-Vostok*, pp. 665–6, 675–6; Kalesnik, *Sovetskiy Soyuz. Gruziya*, p. 273.

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[51] Edmund S. Muskie Foundation, Fellowship program, www.Muskiefoundation.org/fellowships.html.

[52] L. Fuller, ‘Georgia: a look back at Zurab Zhvania's career’, *RFE/RL*, 3 February 2005, rferl.org/content/article/1057252.html; ‘Zurab Zhvania’, Wikipedia.

[53] ‘Nino Burjanadze’, Wikipedia.

[54] BBC News, ‘Georgia remembers Rose Revolution,’ newsvote.bbc.co.uk; ‘Eduard Shevardnadze’, Wikipedia, May 2009, ‘Rose Revolution’, Wikipedia.

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[57] The Georgian flag, a plain red cross on a white ground with four red crosses patty in the corners, is generally reminiscent of the arms of the Knights of Malta and of St John (simply a white cross on a red ground) or of Jerusalem (a gold cross ‘potent’ on a white ground, with four gold crosses in the corners). Knighthood and associated archaizing concepts seem to have been in favour with Zviad Gamsakhurdia and his devotees; ‘Flag of Georgia’, 27 March 2009, www.crwflags.com/FOTW/FLAGS/ge.html; S. Slater, *The Illustrated Book of Heraldry: an International History of Heraldry and Its Contemporary Uses*, London, 2002, 2003, 2006, pp. 73, 76–7, 146–7, 152–3.

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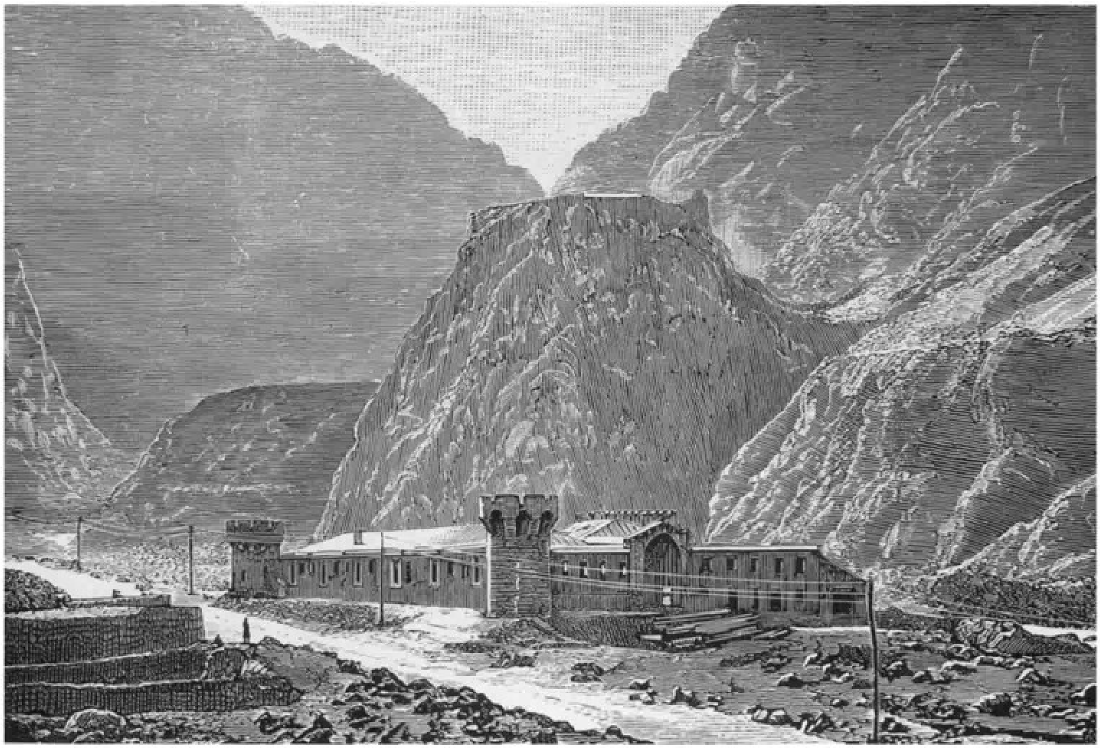
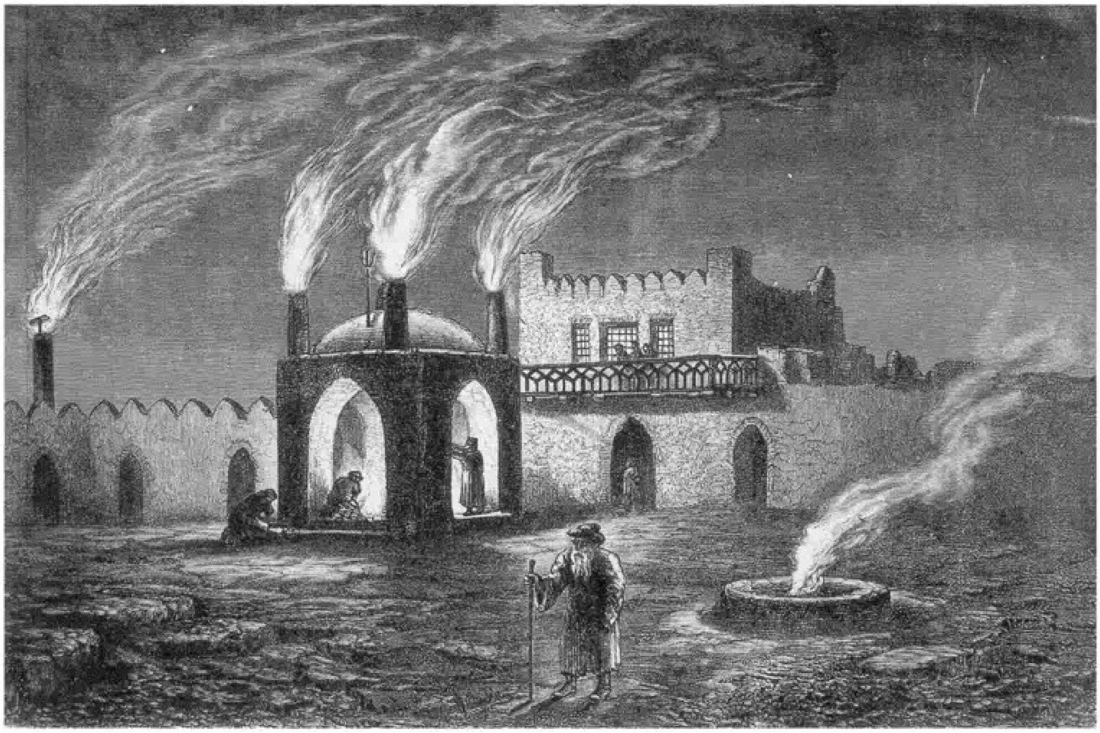
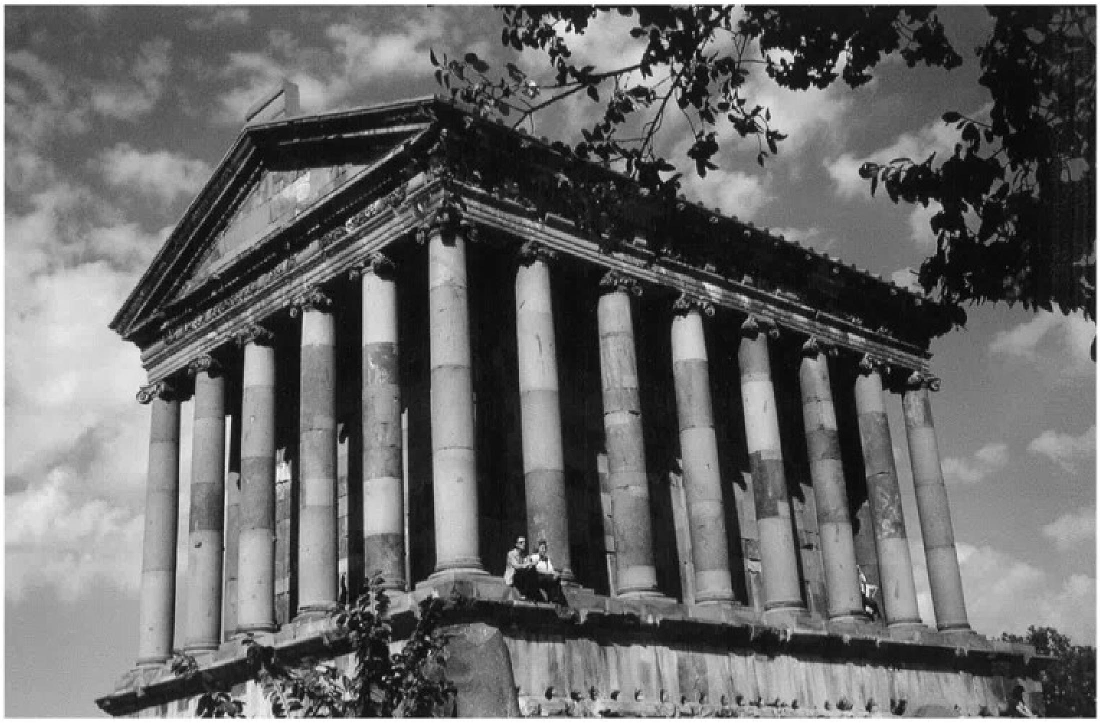


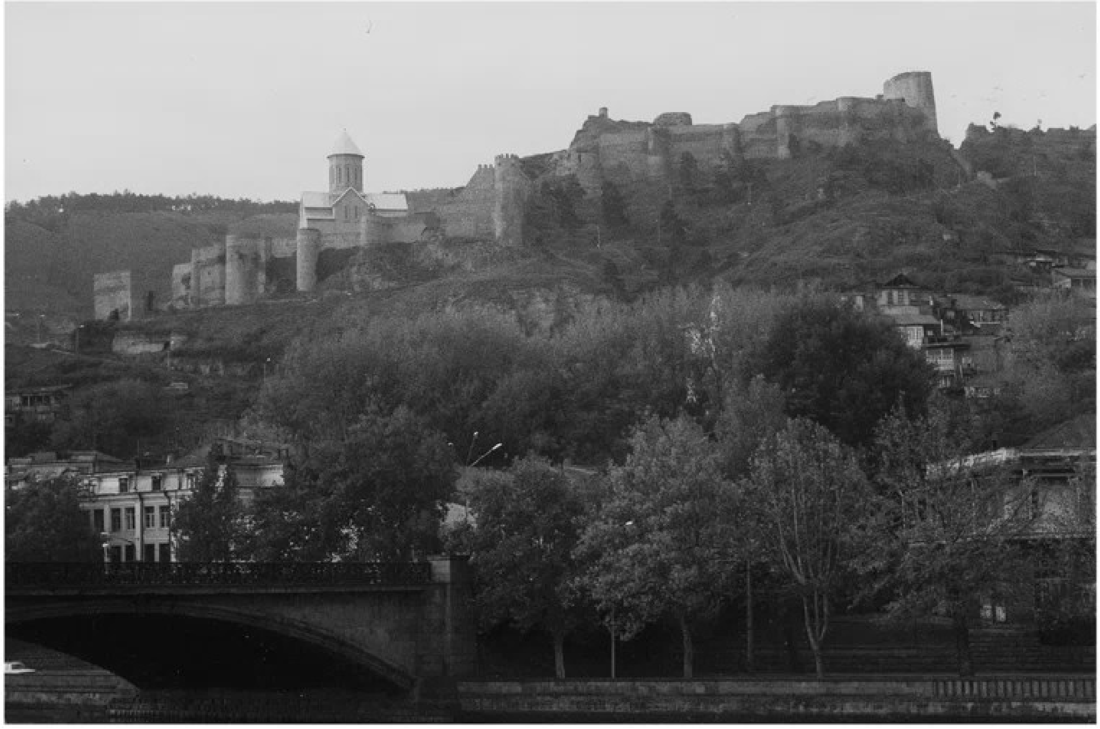
1 The austere aspect of the Russian military highway through the Darial gorge, which was engineered in the nineteenth century to facilitate Russia's conquest of 'Transcaucasia', as the presence of the Russian fort here demonstrates.



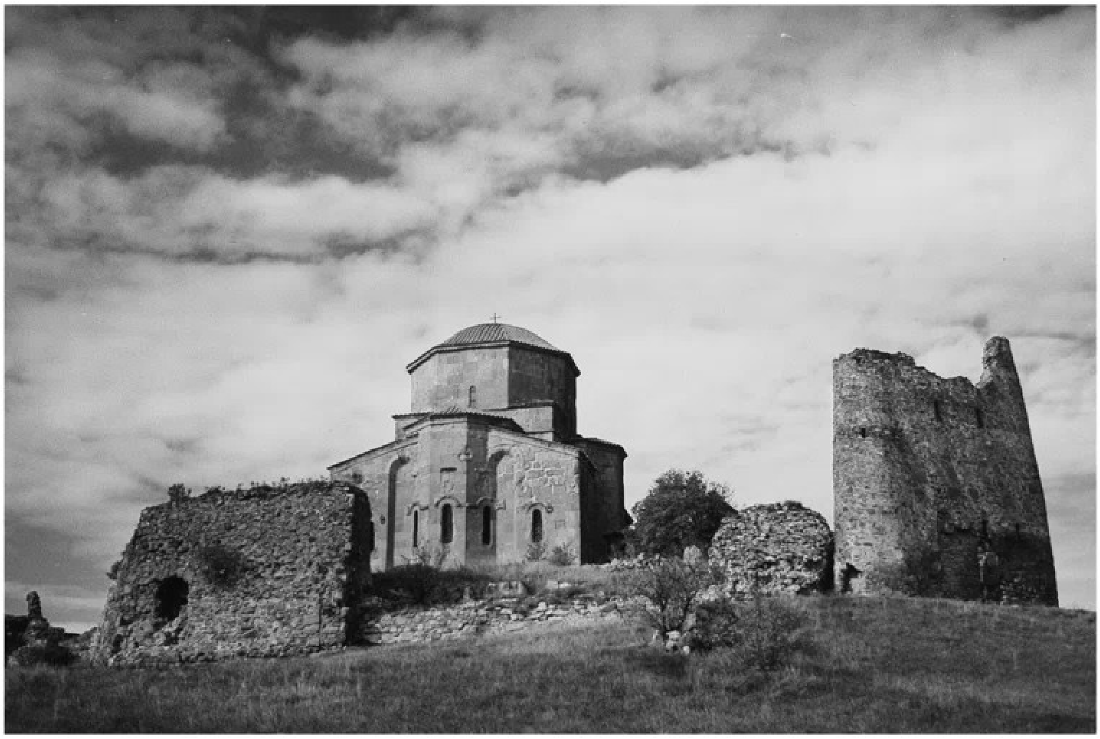
2 Baku region has been associated with Persian Zoroastrianism since the sixth century AD because of its spontaneous naphtha fires. This fire-temple at Surakhany was built by Indian Parsees in the eighteenth century to commemorate the important part played in the religion of ancient Persia by the cult of fire.



3 This Hellenistic temple, 15 miles east of Yerevan on a ridge above the Mtkvari (Kura) river gorge, was built for King Trdat I of Armenia in the first century AD, under the rule of the Roman emperor Vespasian. It was ruined by an earthquake in 1679, and the debris lay around until it was reconstructed in 1966–76.

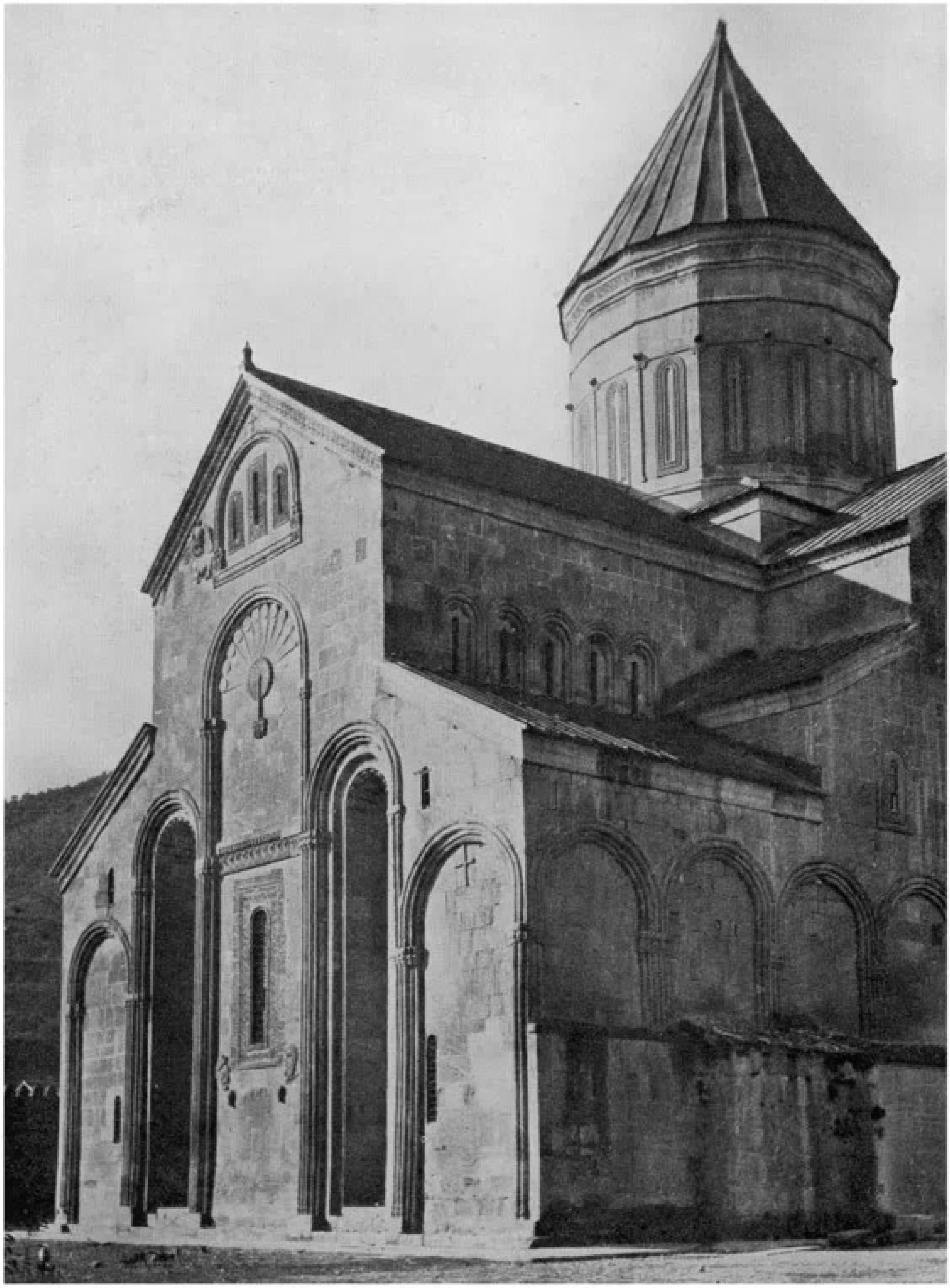


4 Tbilisi's imposing Narikala castle, built on a ridge above the Mtkvari gorge in the fourth century AD. Along with the Metekhi fortress on the opposite bank it guarded the approach to the city from the east. Nevertheless it was taken by the Persians, became the shah's governor's residence, was commonly called ‘the Persian castle’, and was frequently sacked during wars. A palace for the Georgian king, built within it in the seventeenth century, was soon destroyed, and in the nineteenth century it suffered further damage from earthquakes.



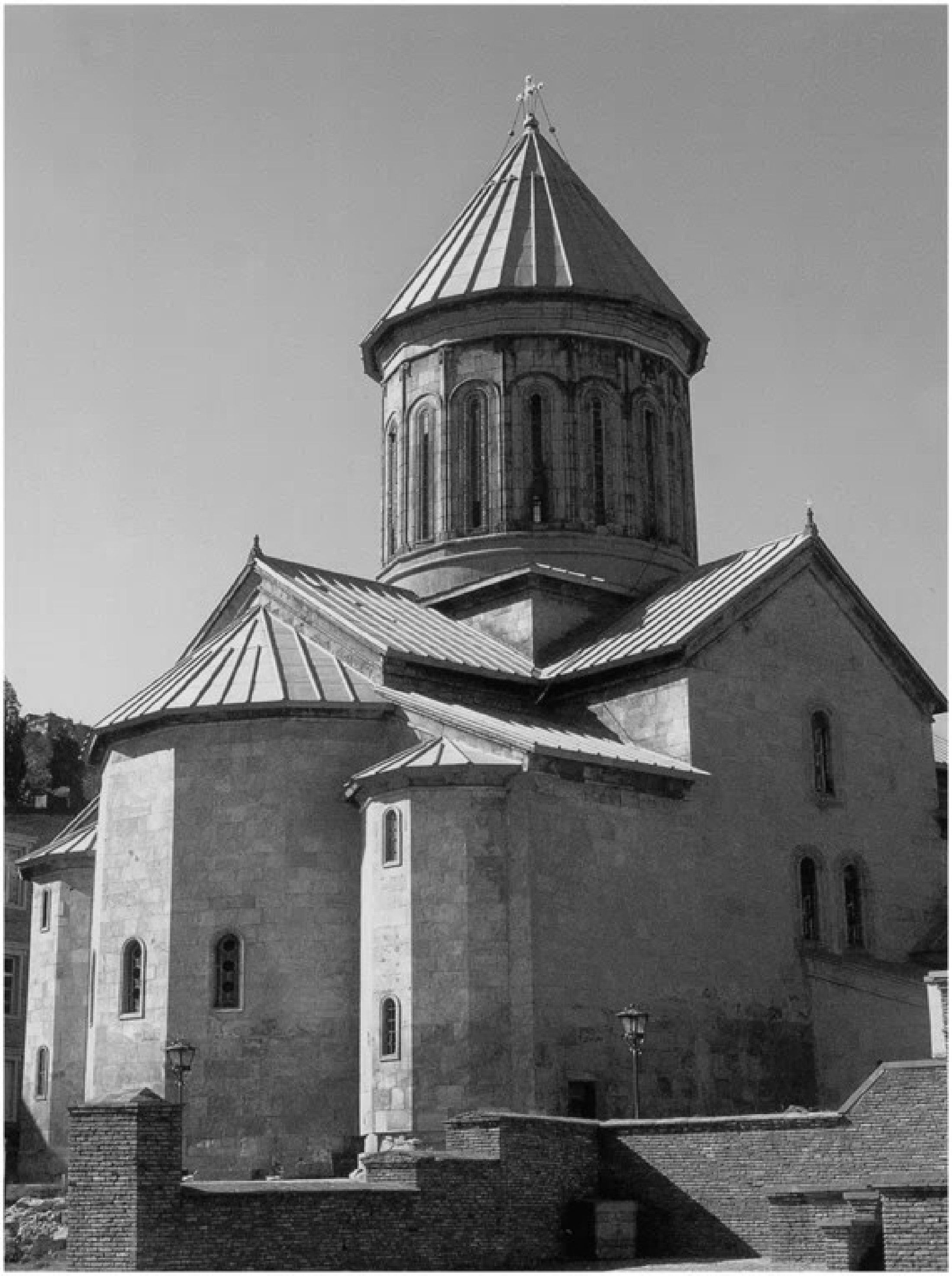
5 To the east of Mtskheta, on top of a conical hill, stands Mtskhetis Jvari (Mtskheta's Holy Cross) church (built between 580 and 605). Like many churches in Georgia and Armenia it is built on the 'centralized' or round plan, with four apses surrounding the central dome, as opposed to the more common 'lengthwise' church or basilica, with the nave extending westward from a domed crossing in the east. (See D. R. Buxton, *Russian Mediaeval Architecture*, Cambridge, 1934, pp. 80–5).

6 A statue in Baku commemorating Nizami Gänjävi – of Gänjä – (c. 1140–1209), celebrated as Azerbaijan's greatest poet and intellectual. Learned in languages, literature, philosophy, science and medicine, he became famous throughout the Middle East for his erudition, which is said to have rivalled that of the European Renaissance. Nizami is also famed for his poetry, particularly the love story *Leili and Majnun* and *The Book of Iskandar*, in which Alexander the Great of Macedon is anachronously portrayed as the model of a wise and just *Muslim* ruler.

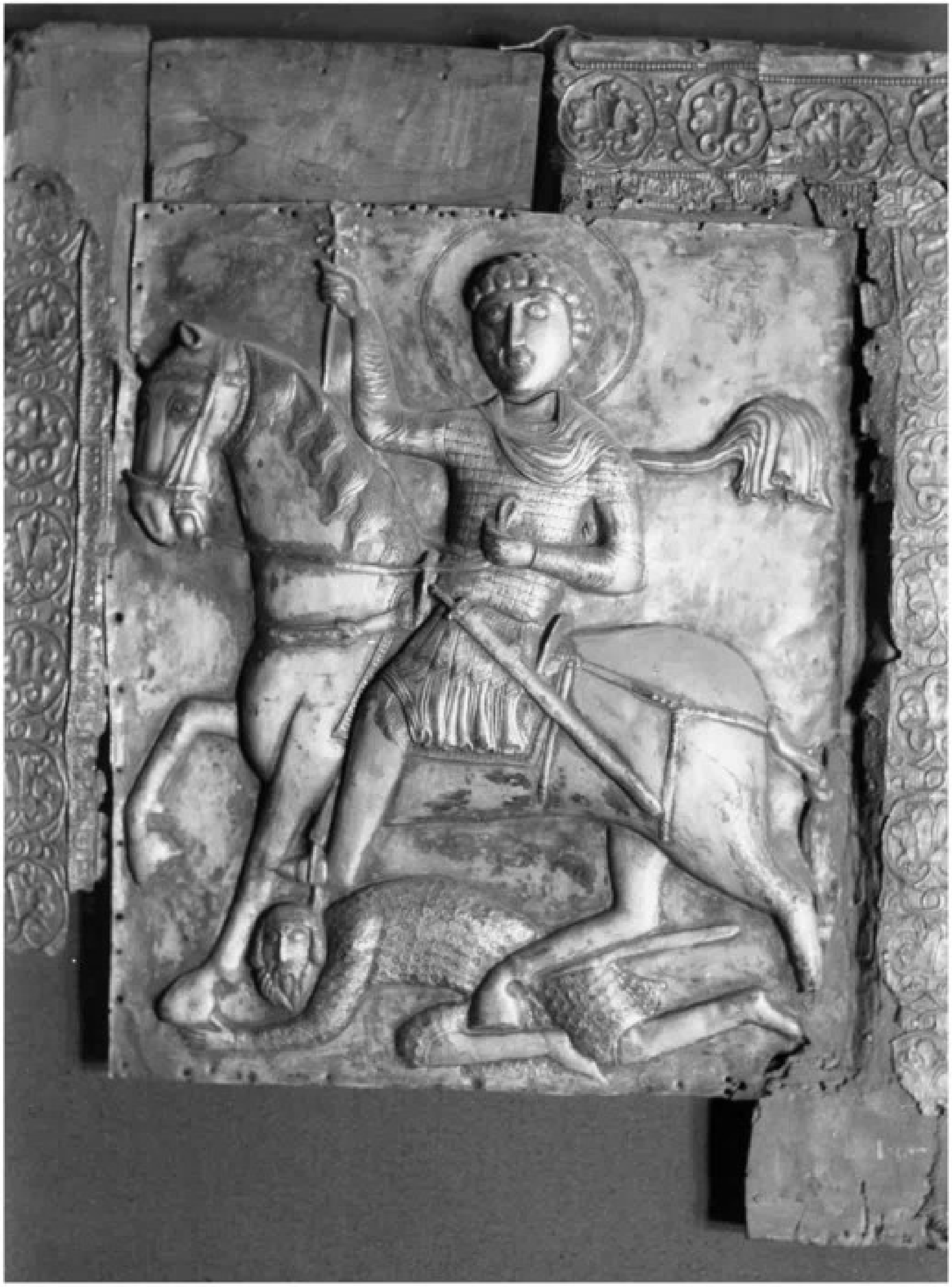


7 Svetitskhoveli cathedral in Mtskheta is the largest church in Georgia, built in the eleventh century on the site of a fourth-century church founded by King Vakhtang Gorgasali.

Its Georgian name, meaning ‘the living/miraculous pillar’, comes from a legend about its foundation.

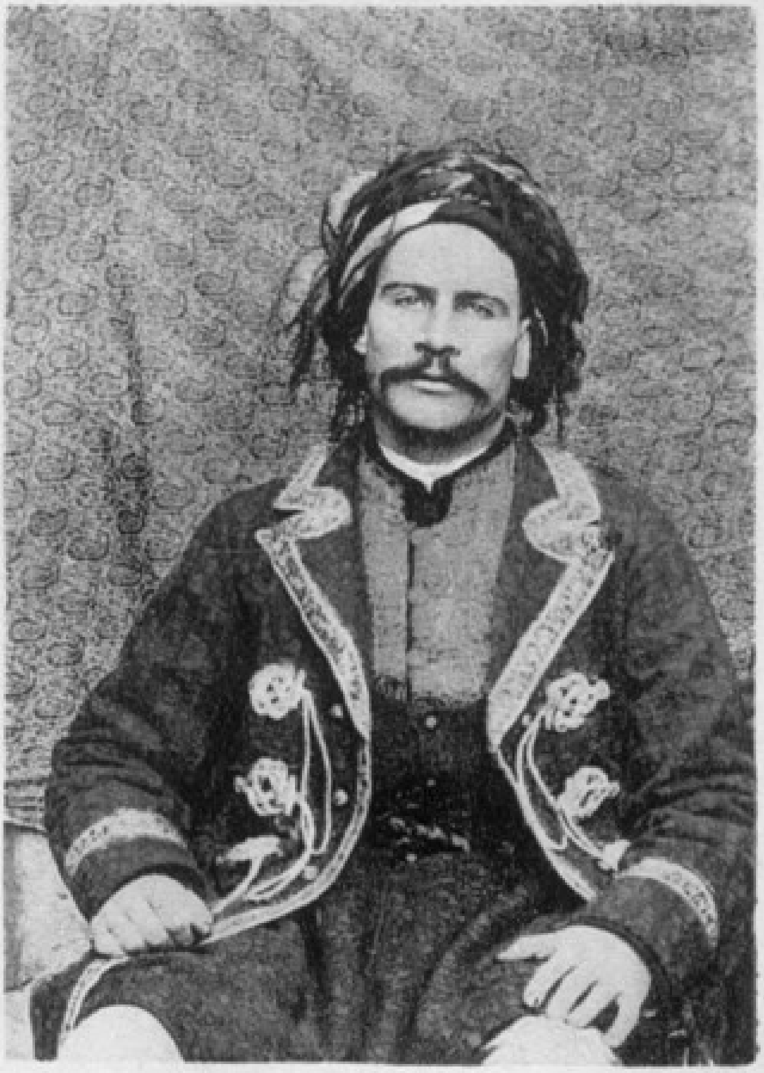


8 Tbilisi: Sioni (Zion) cathedral, originally built in the seventh century, frequently destroyed and rebuilt, but revered by the Georgian Orthodox Church as its central cathedral.



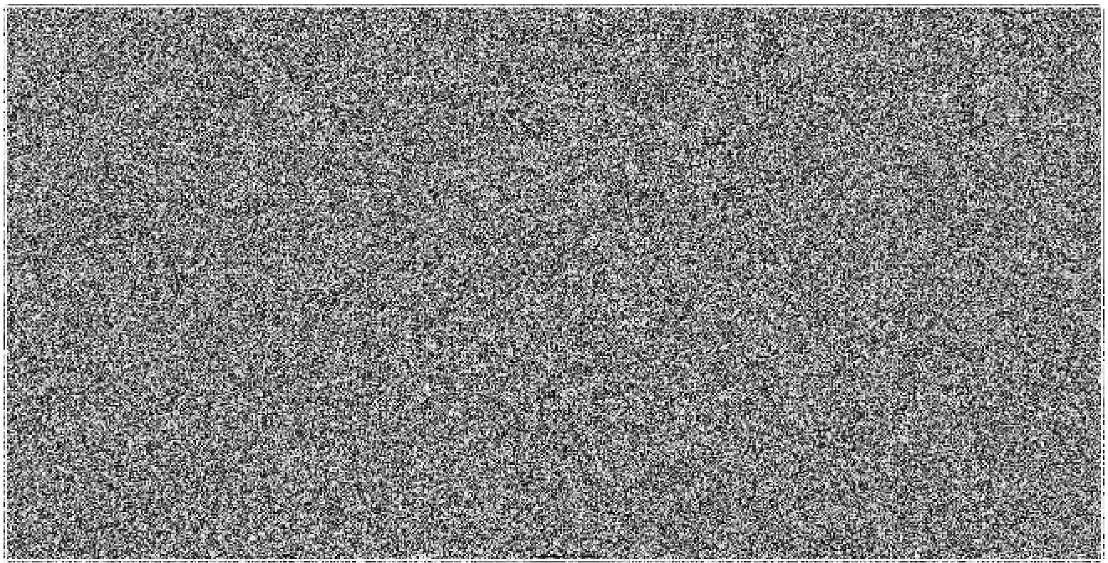
9 St George spearing the Roman emperor Diocletian (284–305), who, as the persecutor of Christians, was a frequent subject of Georgian ikons.

جعفر آقای کرد



No. 388 Djafar Agha, Chef des tribus Kurds

10 Photographic postcard from Tehran (c. 1910) of Jafar Agha, chieftain of one of the many Kurdish clans in the early twentieth century striving to form a Kurdish state independent of the shah of Iran. He clearly shared the Kurdish taste for elaborate headdresses and colourfully embroidered coats. After 1918 he moved his tribe onto lands north of Kermanshah and the Zagros mountains, but his success did not last: it is said that he was either killed in Tabriz by order of a local prince, or executed as a bandit. His brother, Ismail, nicknamed 'Simko', after taking over the highlands west of Lake Urmia (and massacring local Christians) was murdered by the Persian authorities in 1930 – no doubt with the approval of the new self-appointed monarch, Reza Shah, who aimed to suppress all tribalism in Iran.

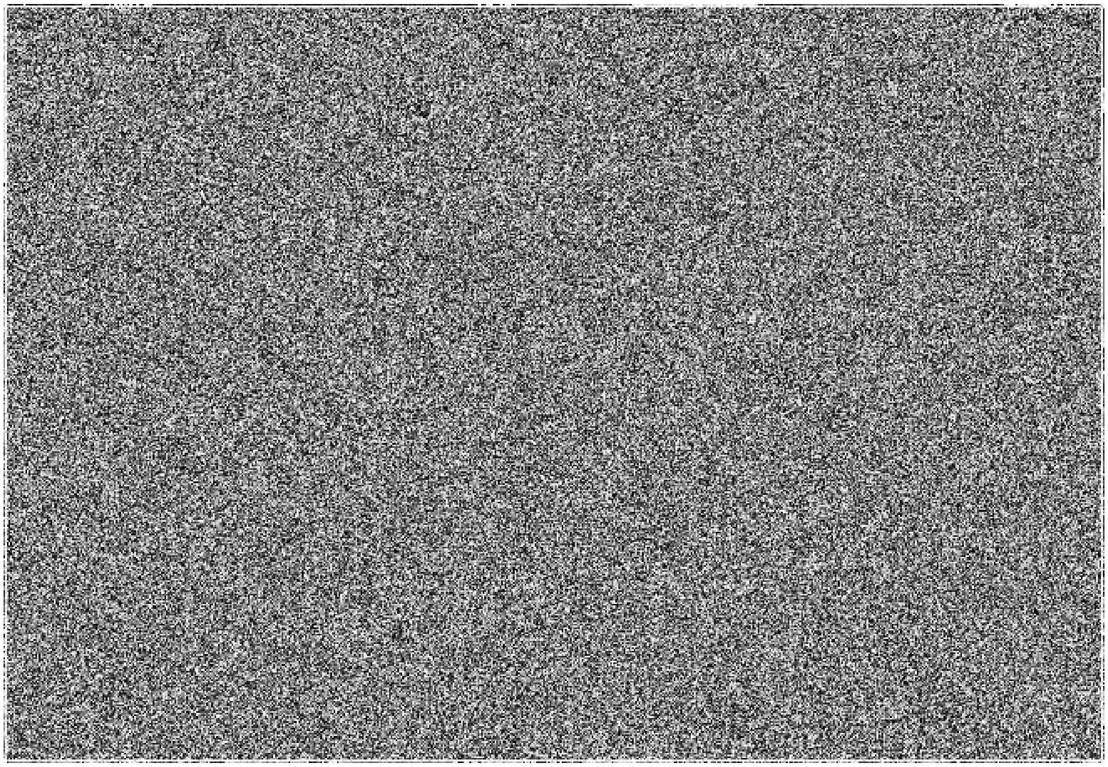


11 Baku: Palace of the Shirvanshahs, built mainly in the fifteenth century. For the history of its buildings, with photographs, plans and drawings, see K. Gink and I. Turánskiy, *Azerbaijan: Mosques, Turrets, Palaces*, Budapest, 1979, pp. 45–50.

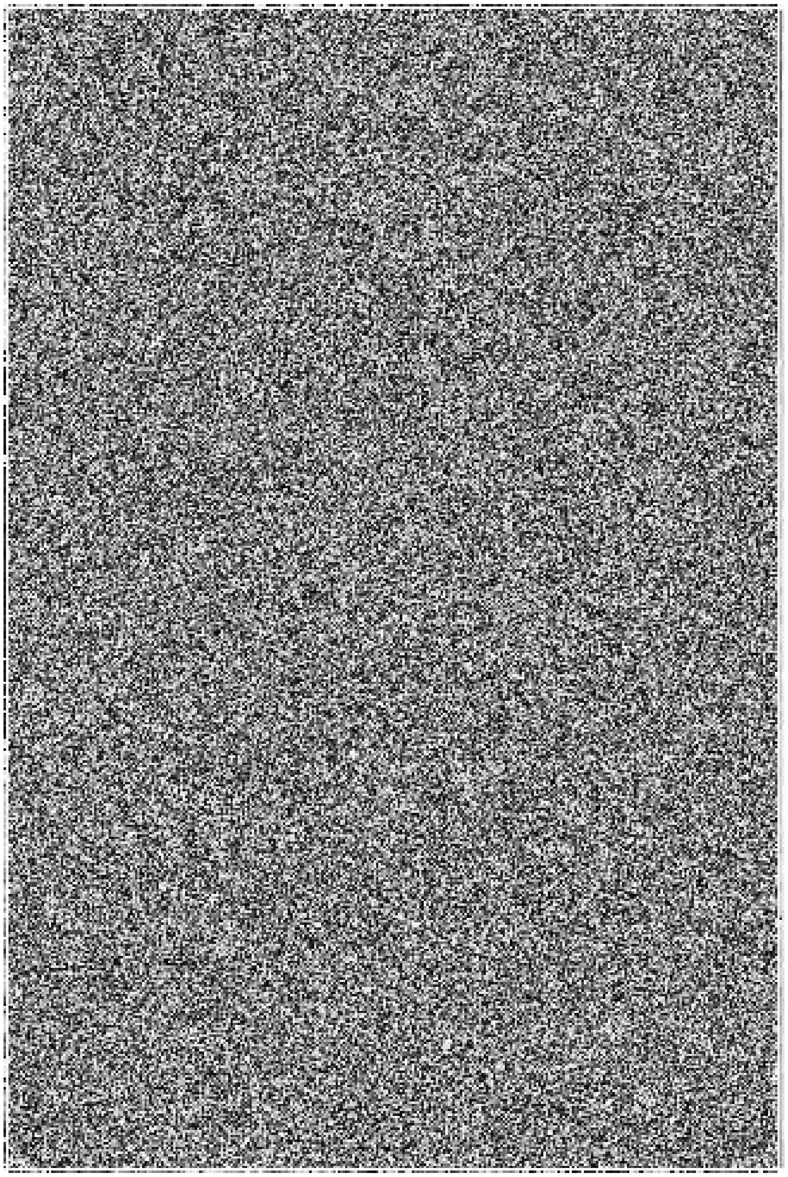
12 King Rostevan of an imaginary ‘Arabia’ has recently declared his voluntary abdication in favour of his daughter Tinatin, and she, after tearful misgivings, has demonstrated her reliability as a ruler. The young commander of the ‘Arabian’ army, Avtandil, who loves Tinatin, challenges

Rostevan to compete with him in a big hunt (*battue*), and Avtandil wins by killing more animals than Rostevan. In this Persian-style picture Tinatin has summoned the languishing Avtandil to her chamber. She tells him how unhappy her father has been because of a mysterious, stately knight he encountered after the hunt, mounted on a black horse, and wearing over his antique armour a tiger skin. When challenged by the king's messengers, he had instantly charged and scattered them, then galloped off and vanished. Tinatin has summoned Avtandil to send him in quest of the knight in tiger skin: after three years questing Avtandil is to return and marry her.

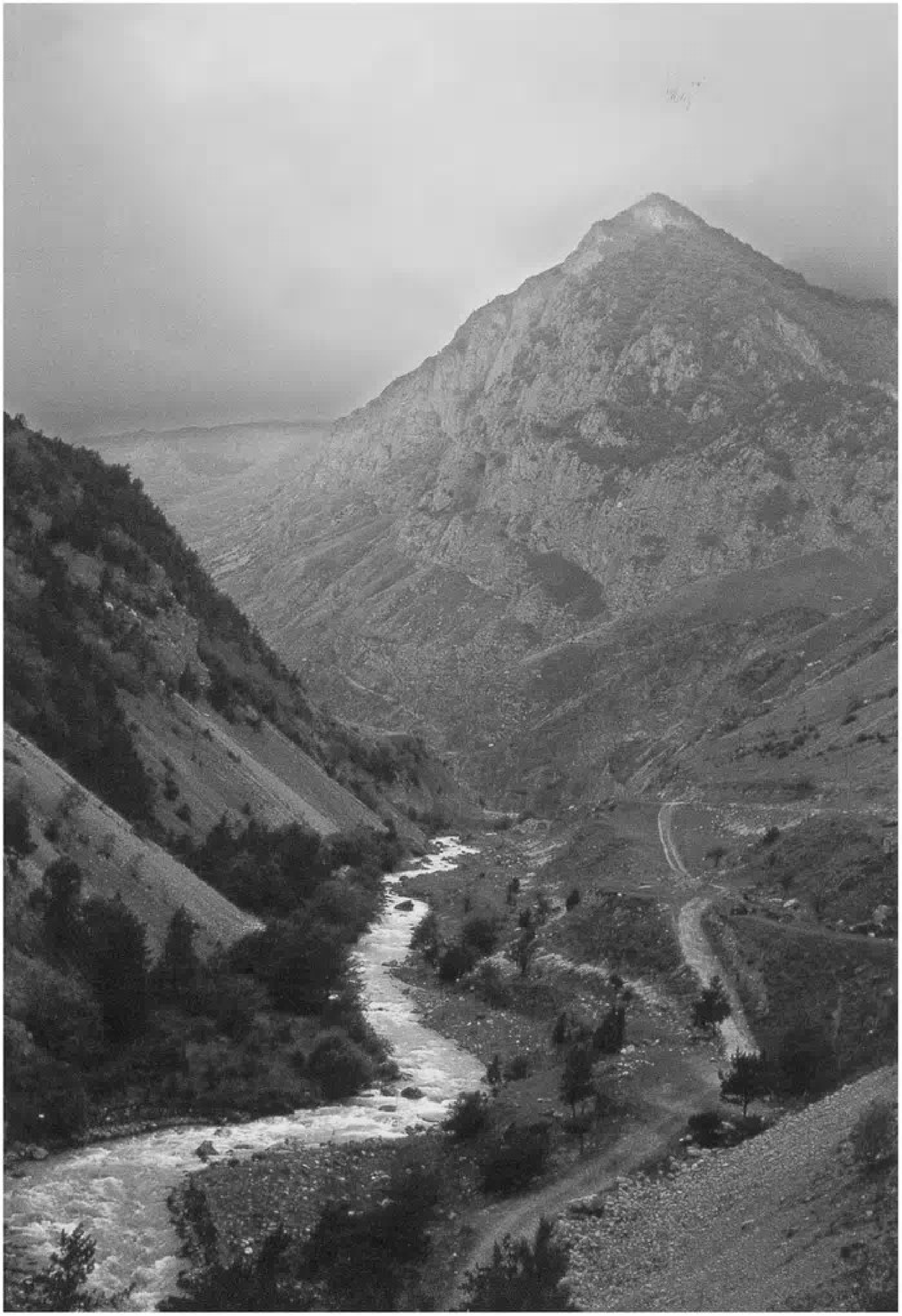
This bald summary represents about one-eighth of Rustaveli's twelfth- century Georgian poem, but is comparable with the travellers' tales and uncanny adventures presented by contemporary metrical romances written in English and other languages.



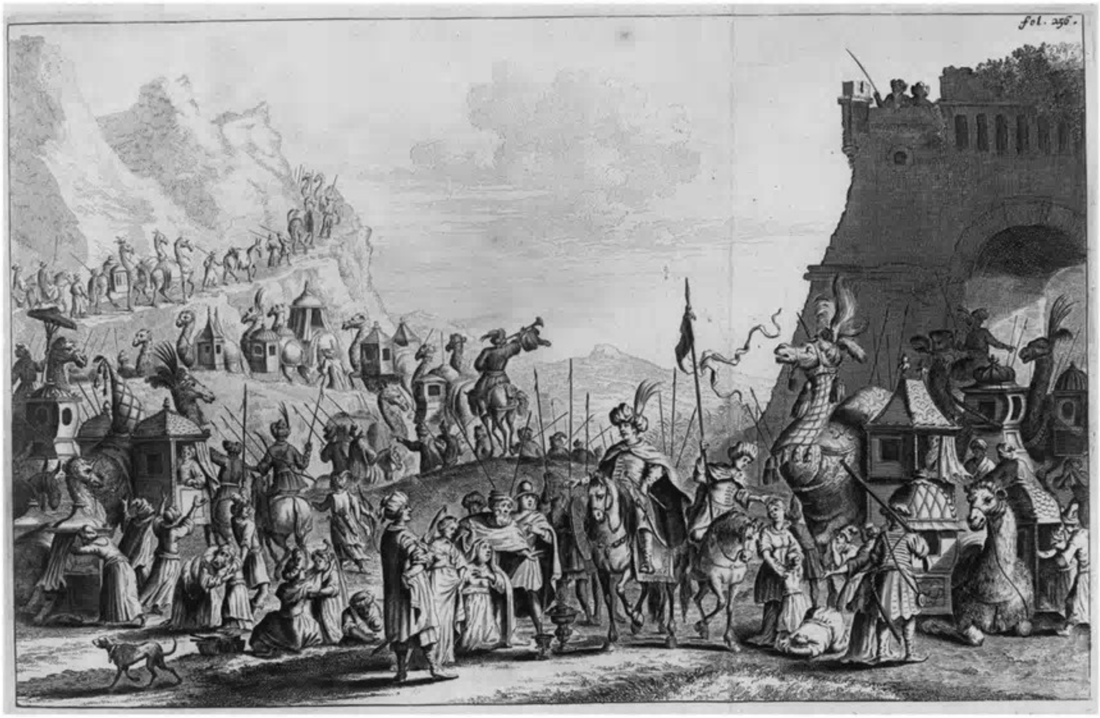
13 A misleadingly serene view of Tabriz, which since the thirteenth century AD has been one of the biggest cities in the Middle East. A flourishing Persian city on the Central Asia--Mediterranean trade route, it was frequently occupied by Turkic invaders. Those who settled in the region and adopted Persian culture became the Azerbaijanis. The mosque is not Tabriz's famous Blue mosque, as that was badly damaged by earthquake in 1779 and not rebuilt until 1973. During Iran's nineteenth--twentieth-century political changes, the Tabriz Azerbaijanis led the democratic movement challenging the shahs' hereditary autocracy. (See T. Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (revised edn), London, 2000.)



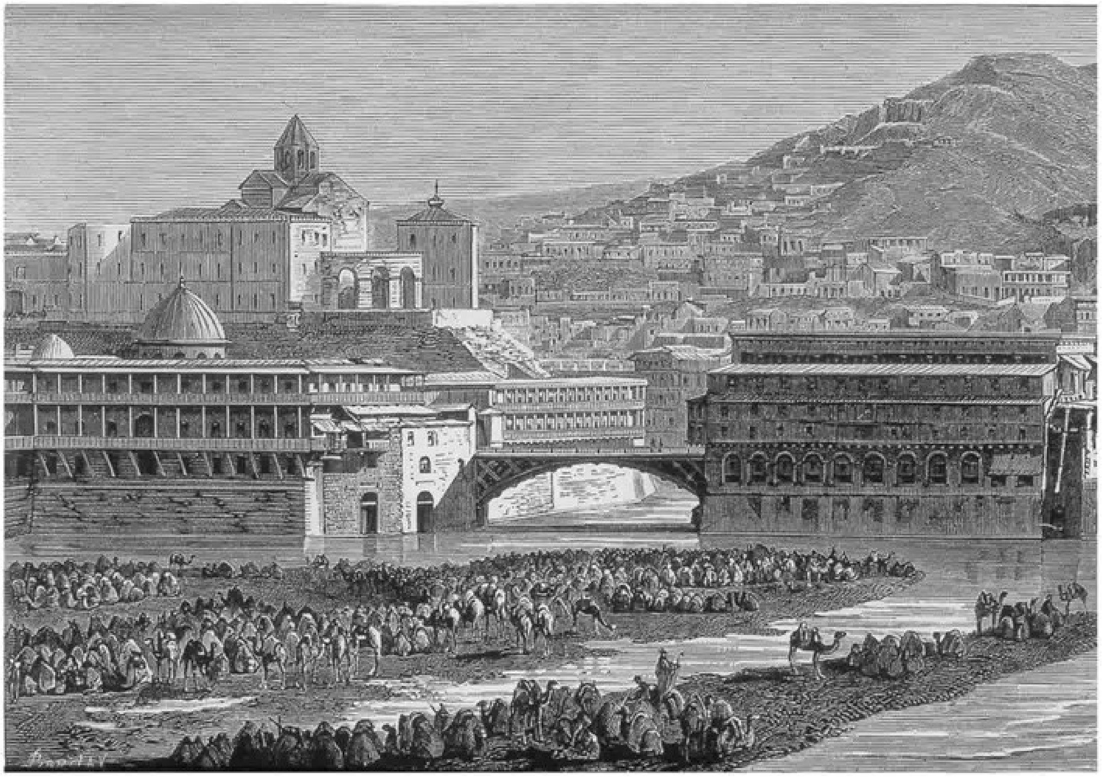
14 Circassian warrior from Fiagdon in North Caucasus (1840s print).



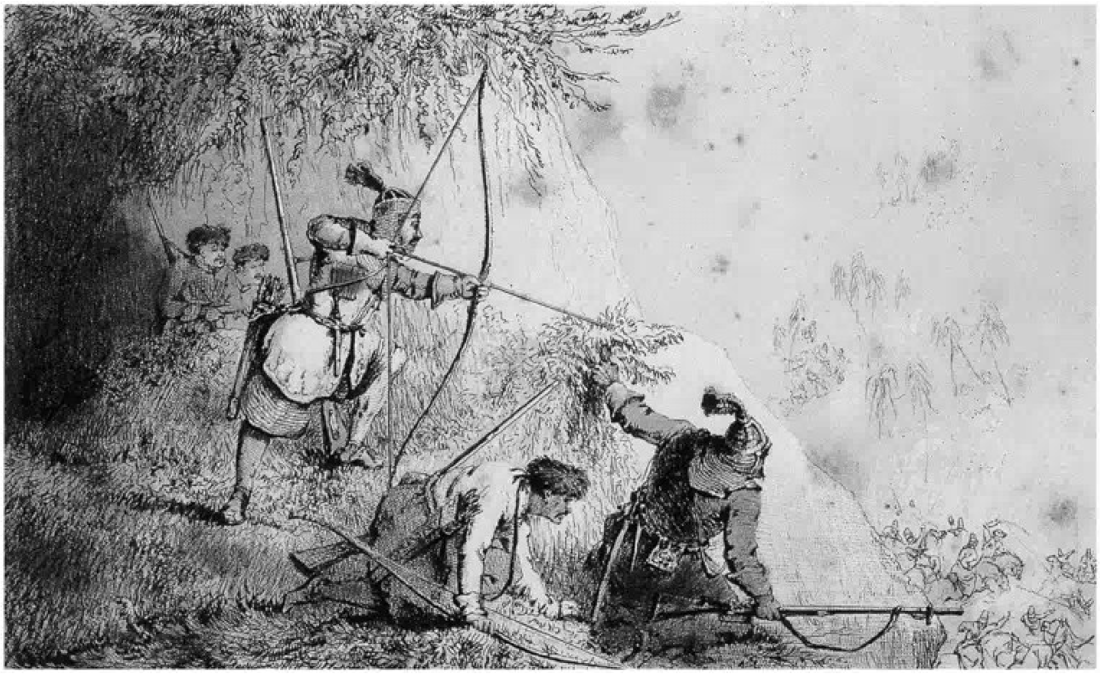
15 The gorge of the Fiagdon, one of the turbulent upper tributaries of the Terek in North Osetia.



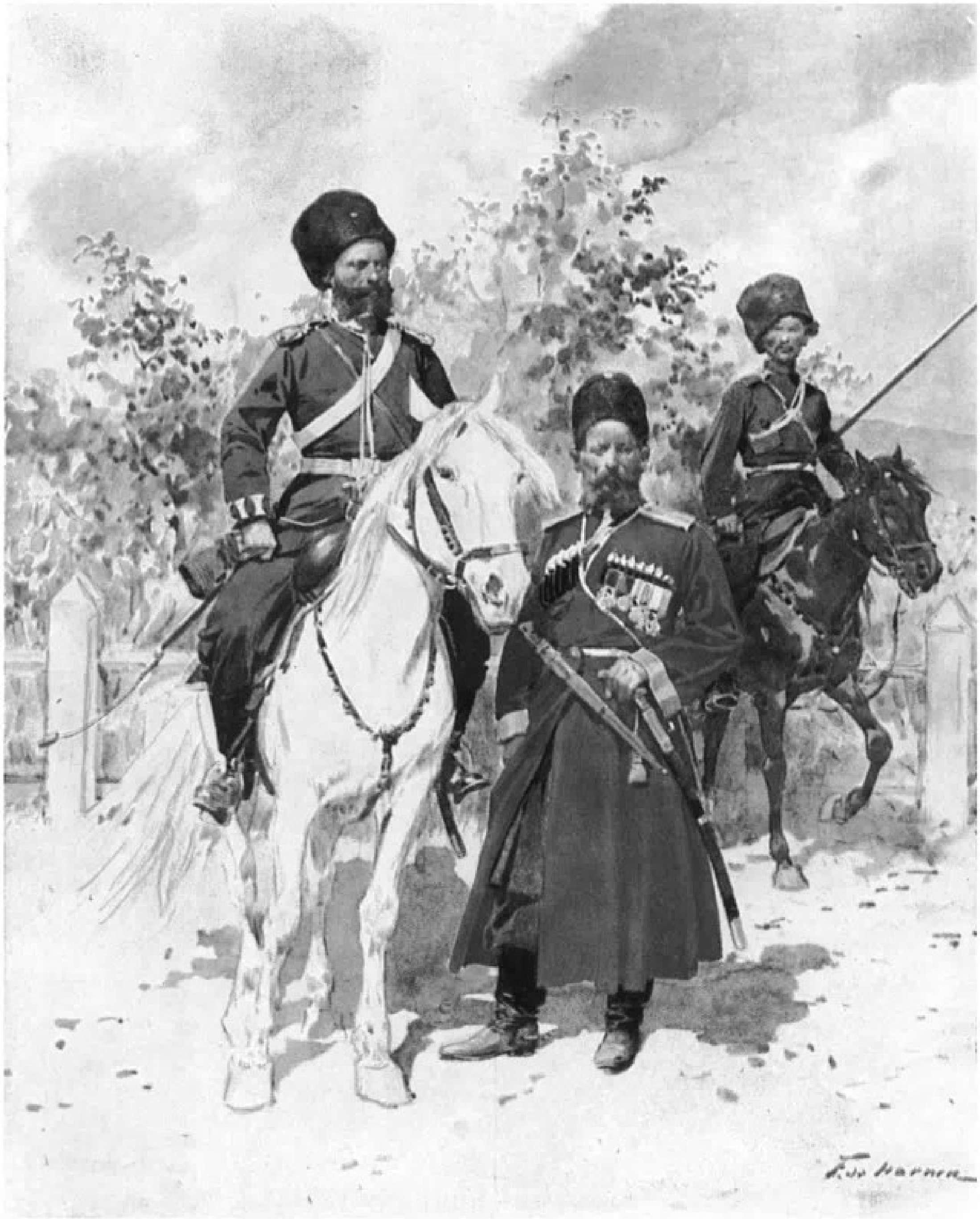
16 A seventeenth-century engraving of a caravan setting out from Shamakha carrying Caucasian women as slaves to Turkey via North Caucasus. The author encountered this picture in an Azerbaijani children's book – Jagub Mahmudov, *Odlar jurduna säyahät* (*Journey to the Land of Fires*), Baku, 1980, the original source being a Dutch book published in French: Jean Struys, *Les voyages de Jean Struys, en Moscovie, en Tartarie, en Perse, aux Indes, et en plusieurs autres pays étrangers*, Amsterdam, 1681.



17 Camels resting at the Tbilisi caravansaray on the bank of the Mtkvari below Metekhi bridge (nineteenth-century illustration).

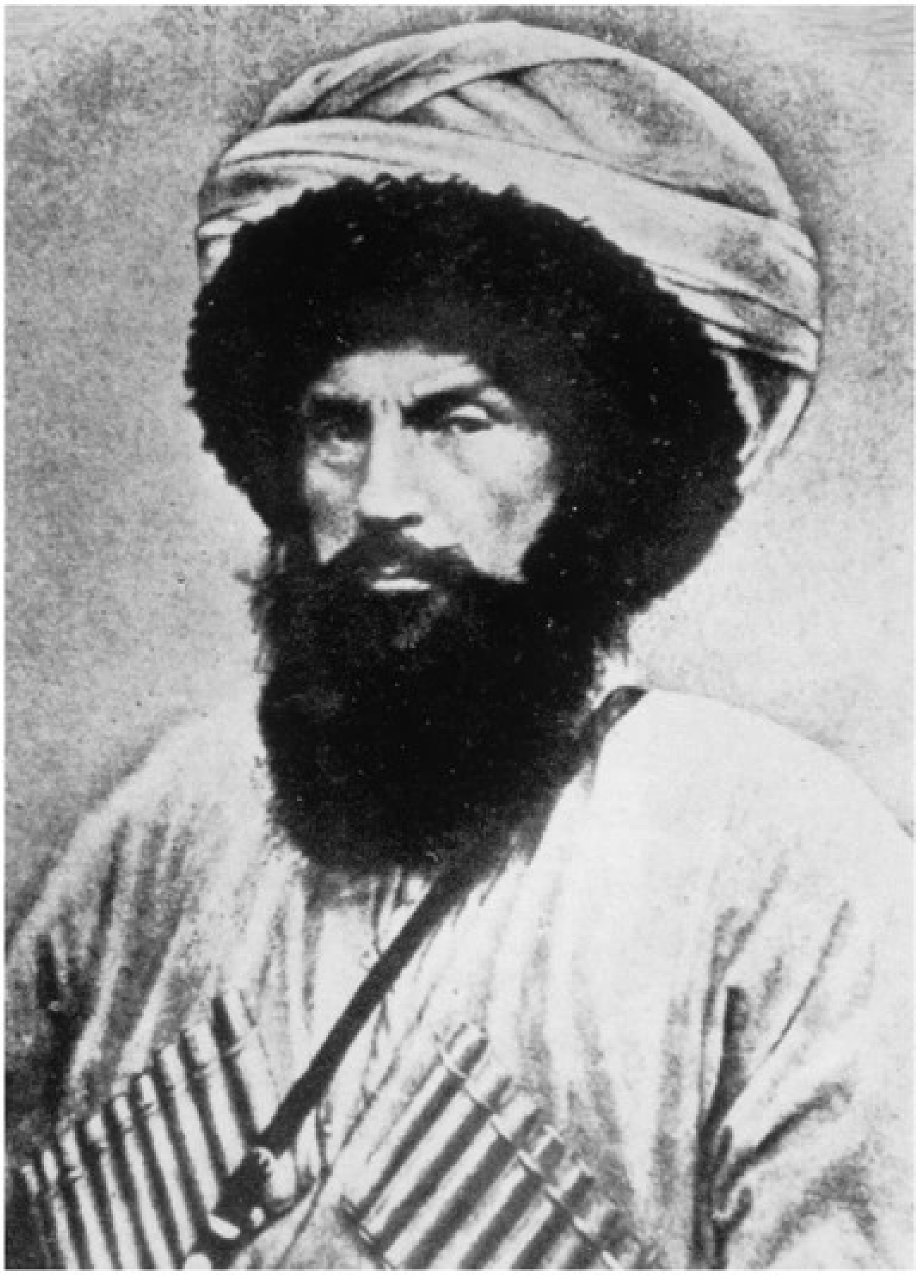


18 Circassian guerrillas defend their land from Russian Cossacks, with bows and arrows against guns (early nineteenth century).

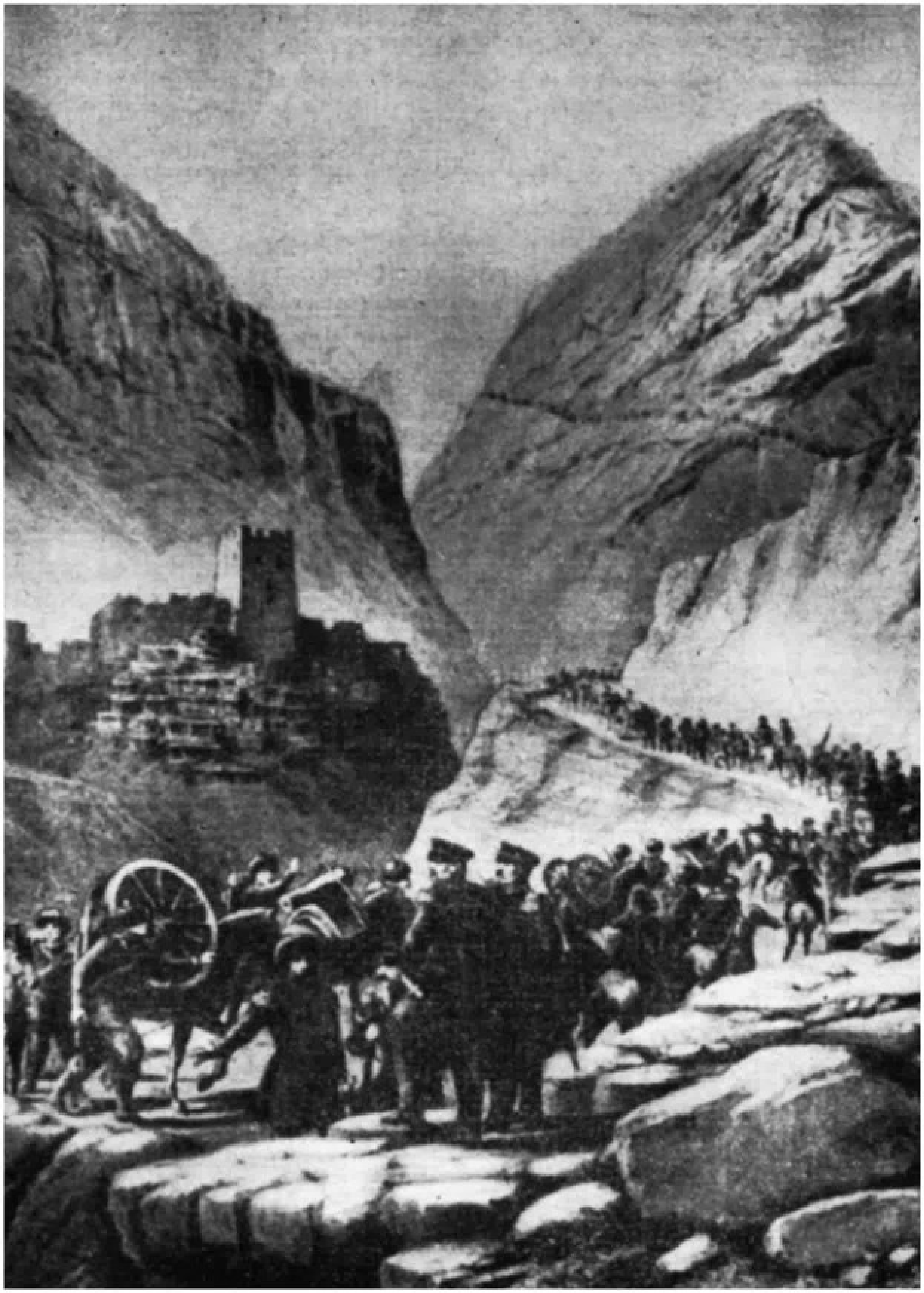


19 Cossacks of the Emperor's Bodyguard (in Russian *Konvoy*) under Nicholas II. The officer wears the standard Caucasian coat (*cherkeska*), with vertical cartridge pouches across the chest and flared skirt, while the Cossacks have plain tunics. During the nineteenth century Russia recruited some indigenous Caucasian aristocrats as officers for the

Konvoy. Until the 1820s the lower ranks were recruited only from Russian Cossacks, but later some native Caucasians were included. In a major reorganization in 1856 a specifically Caucasian Lifeguards Squadron was recruited, mainly from Orthodox Georgians, but including some Lezgis and Azerbaijanis. However, relations with the Muslims were uneasy, and from 1874 they could pay a tax instead of performing military service. In 1881 the Caucasian Squadron was disbanded, and the Royal Bodyguard reverted to recruitment exclusively from Terek and Kuban Cossacks.



20 The third ruling imam of Daghestan and Chechenia, the Avar Shamil, who led the resistance to the Russian invasion from 1834; this is a photograph taken after he was forced to surrender in August 1859.



21 Russian artillery and infantry moving up to destroy a mountain village in Daghestan during the prolonged war of subjugation waged by General Yermolov's Russian army during the nineteenth century.

НАШ

ДАГЕСТАН

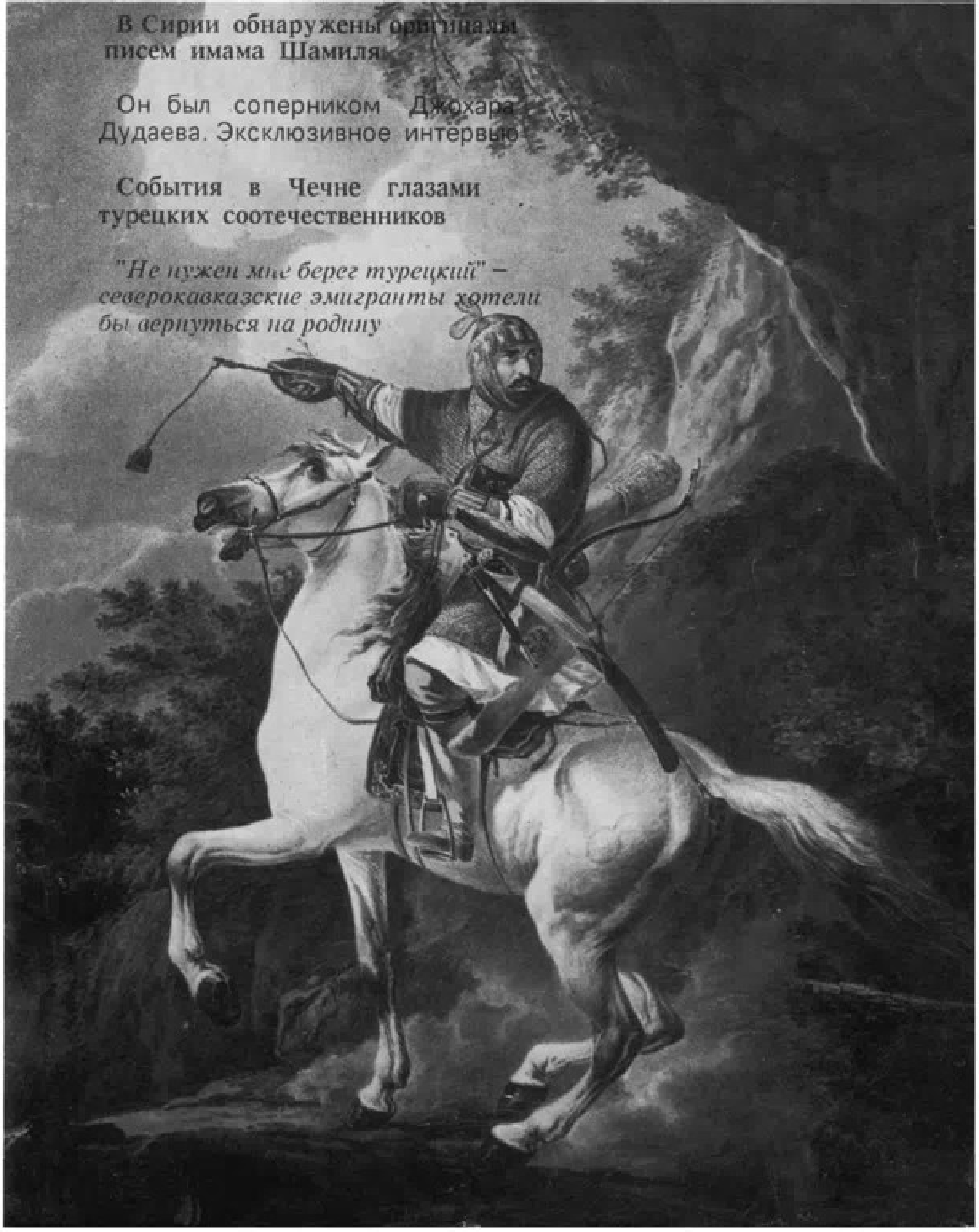
№1/92

В Сирии обнаружены оригиналы писем имама Шамиля

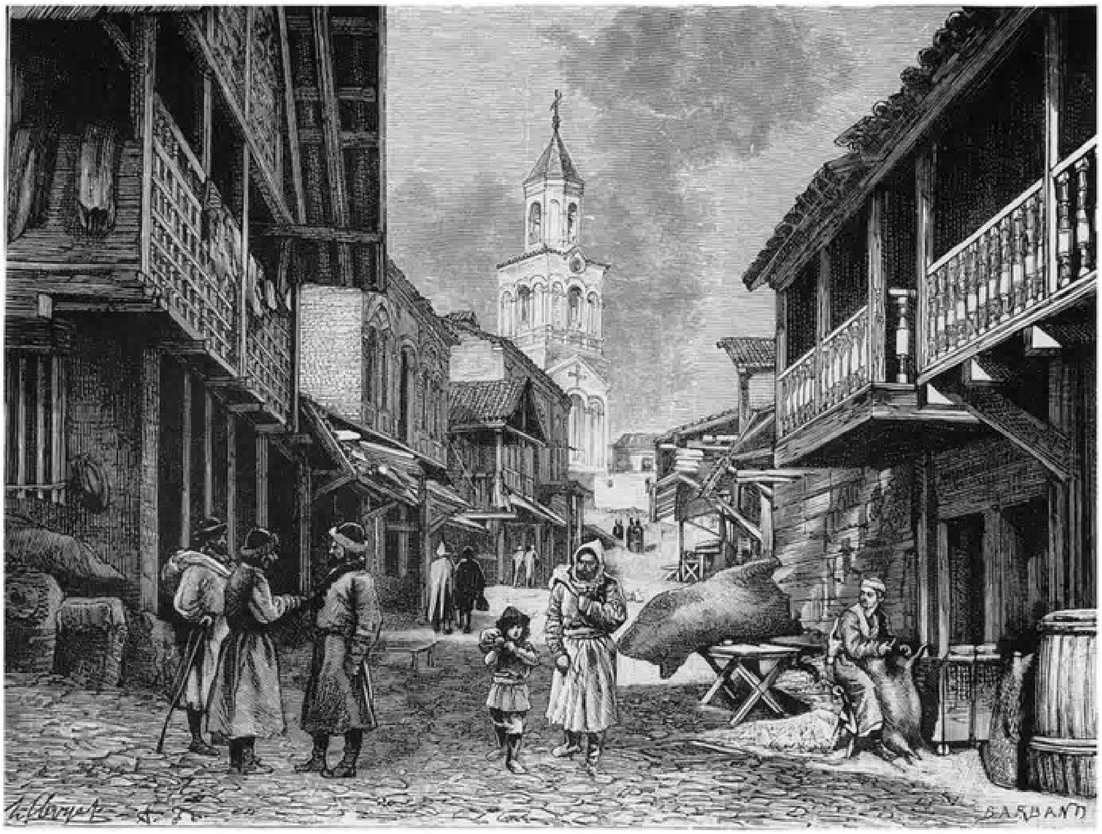
Он был соперником Джохара Дудаева. Эксклюзивное интервью

События в Чечне глазами турецких соотечественников

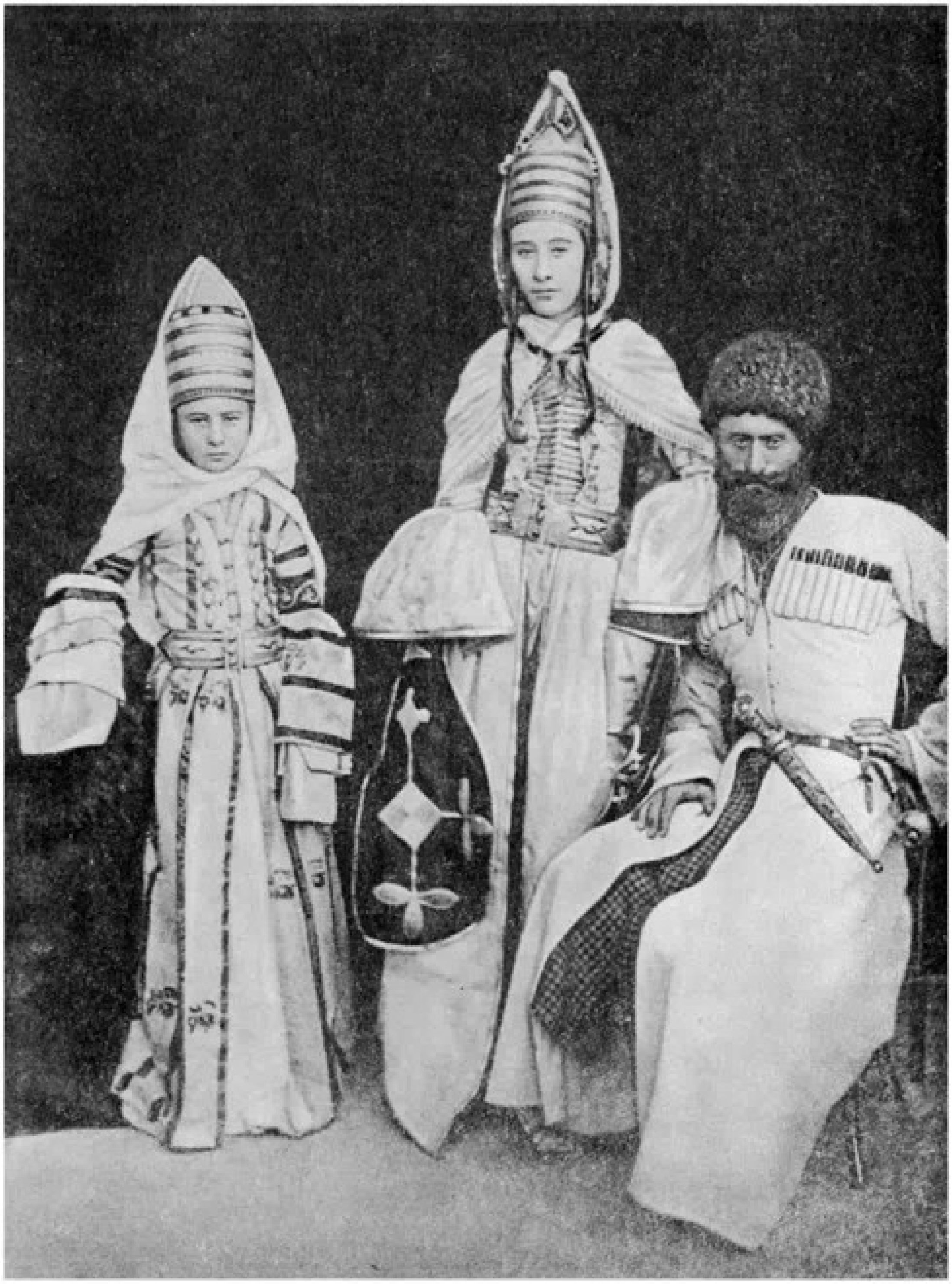
"Не нужен мне берег турецкий" – северокавказские эмигранты хотели бы вернуться на родину



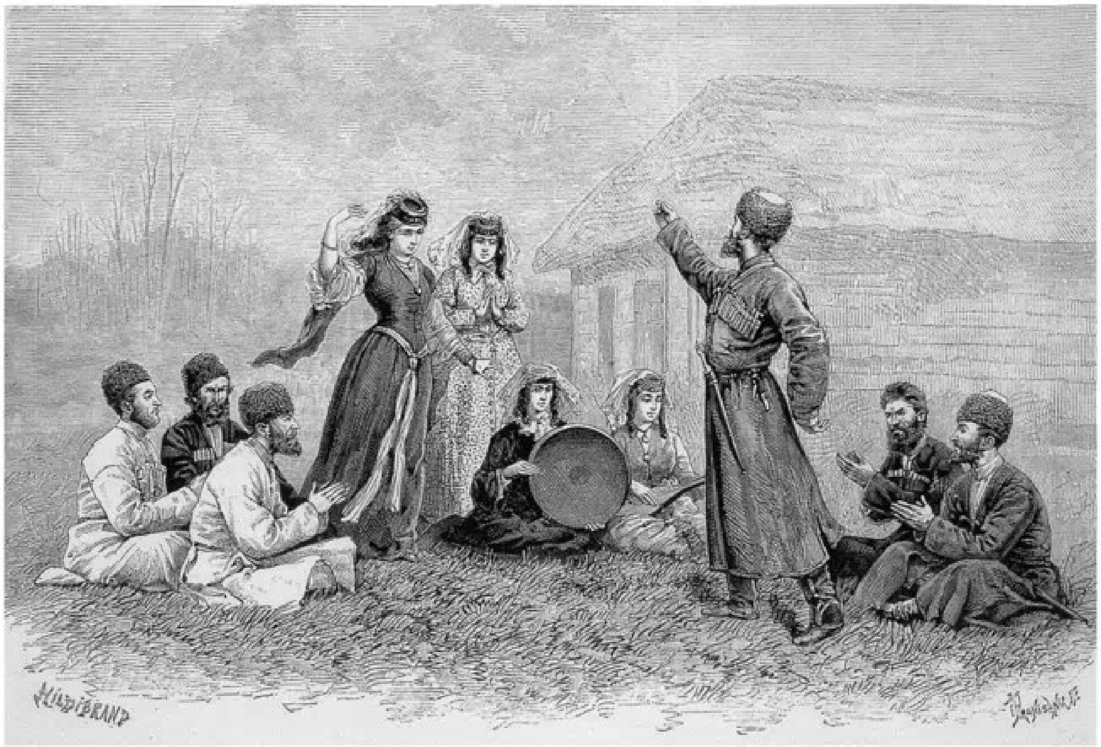
22 A Circassian (Kabardan) prince of the early nineteenth century, after a painting by the Polish painter Aleksander Orlowski (1777–1832), on the cover of the magazine *Nash Dagestan* (formerly *Sovetskiy Dagestan*), no. 1, 1992. He is in full battle-gear, with coat of mail, helmet, vambraces (elbow-pieces) and gauntlets, and for weaponry, sabre, dagger, bow and covered quiver. The Kabardans were renowned horse-breeders with a systematic register of brands – the one on this horse's haunch being probably that of the princely Talostal (Russified as Talostanov) family. See V. S. Beslanov, *Malaya Kabarda (XIII--nachala XX veka)*, 2nd, revised edn, Nalchik, 1995, pp. 202, 206; J. F. Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*, 2 vols., London, 1940, p. 225; Ye. N. Studenetskaya, *Odezhda narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, *XVIII--XX vv.*, Moscow, 1989, p. 38; T. Dobrowolski, *Sztuka polska, od czasów najdawnieyszykh do ostatnich,* Kraków, 1974, pp. 541, 543.



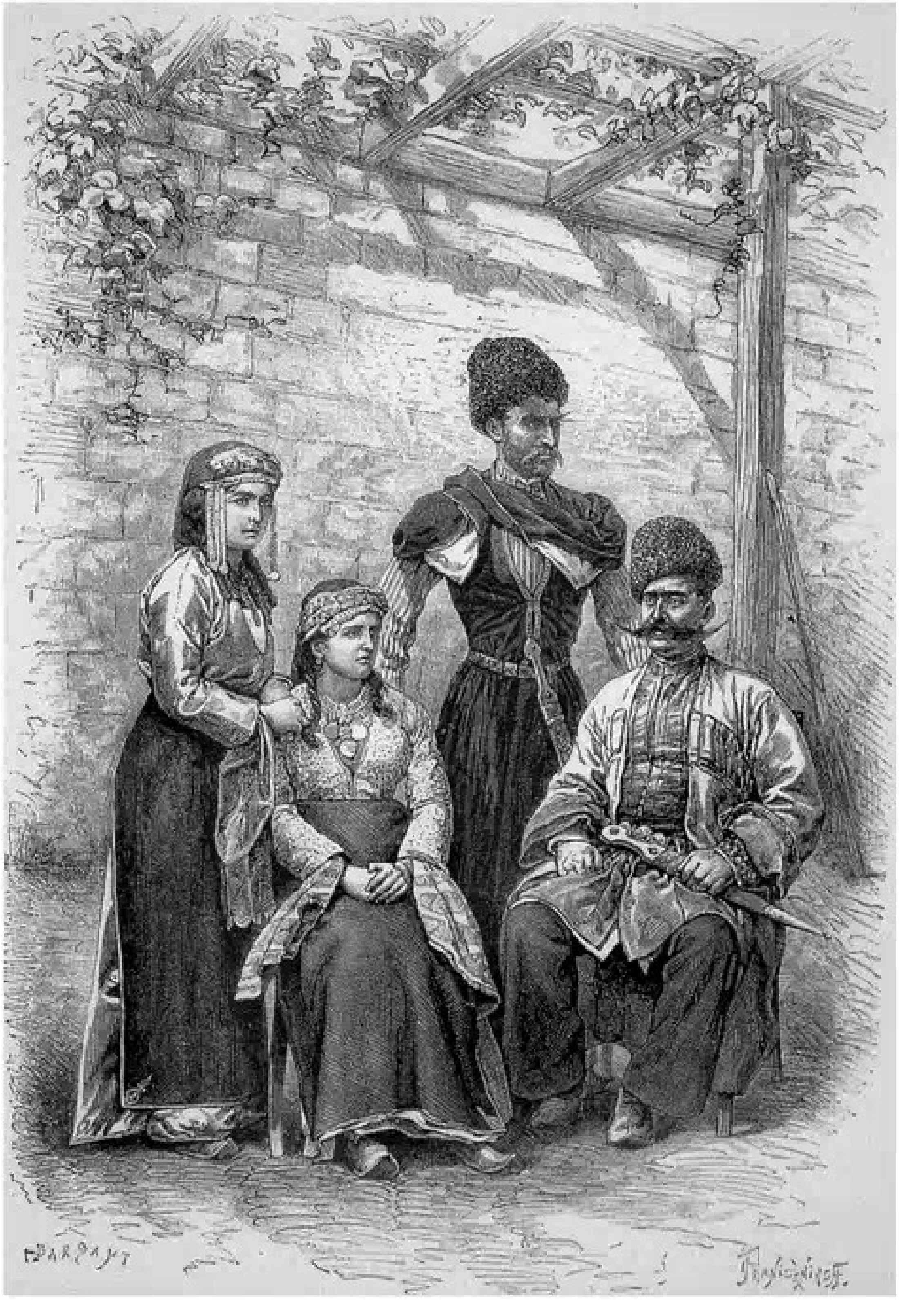
23 A nineteenth-century view of a Tbilisi street in winter, with the street workshop of a wineskin-maker, and at the top of the street the church of St George Kvashveti.



24 Kabardan girls in festive attire, with their father, a prince of the Batashev family (late nineteenth-century photograph). The girls' tall hats for special occasions were common among North Caucasus peoples, as were the additional oversleeves.

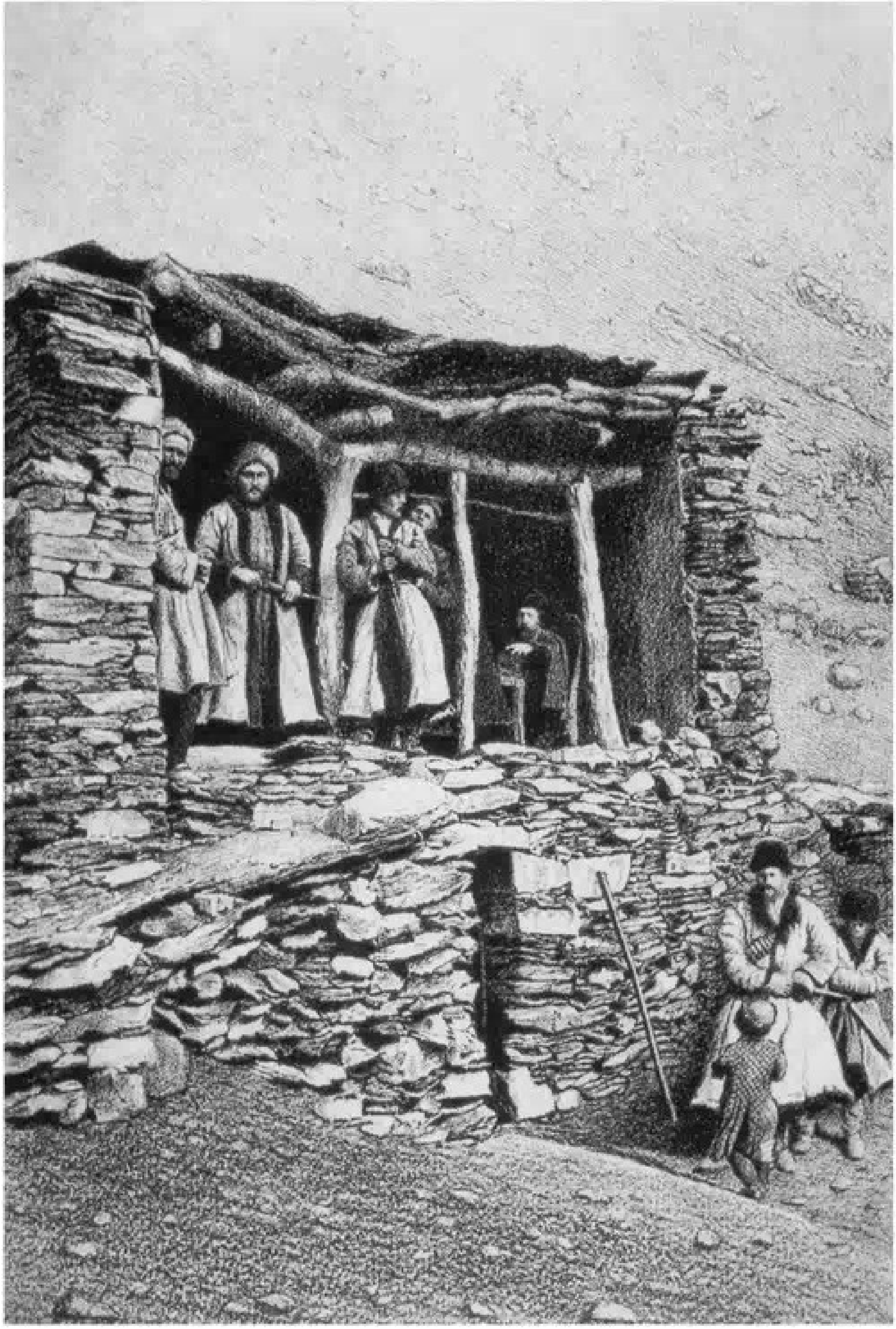

HILDIBRAND

25 Imeretians (West Georgians) performing the 'Lezginka' dance in traditional costume.

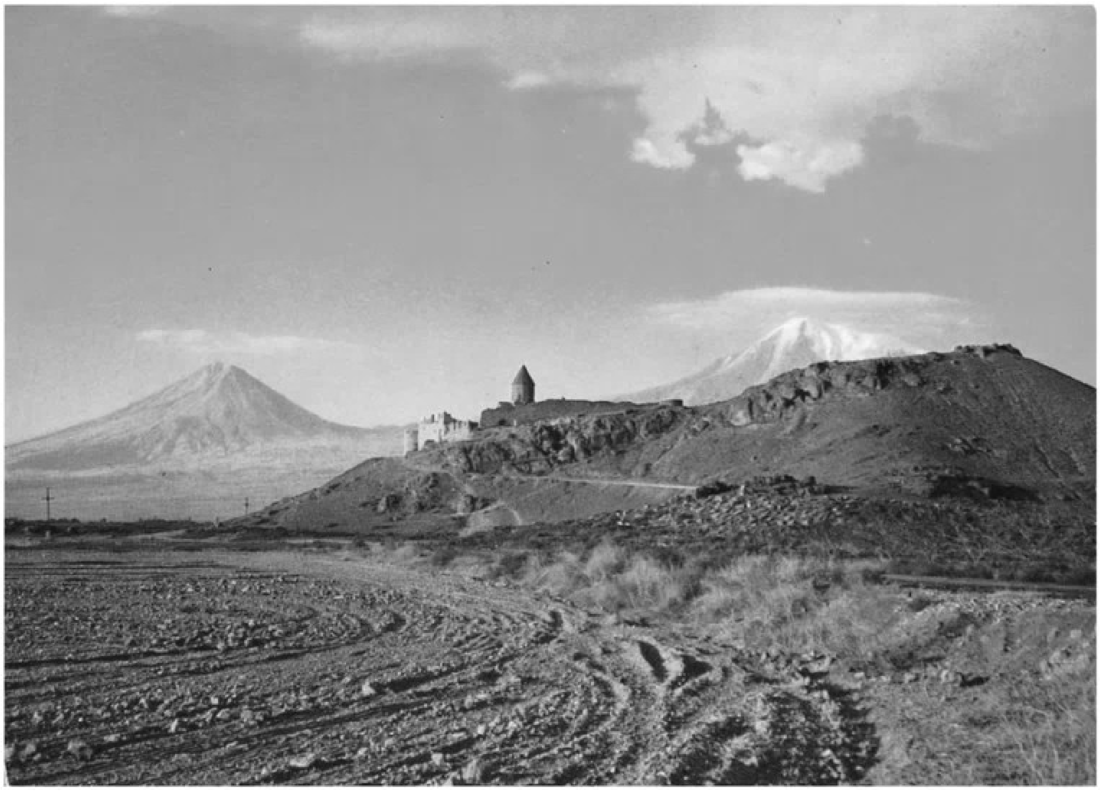


26 A prosperous Armenian family, early twentieth century. 'Armenian Types and Costumes' is the title on the page, but it looks like a family to me.

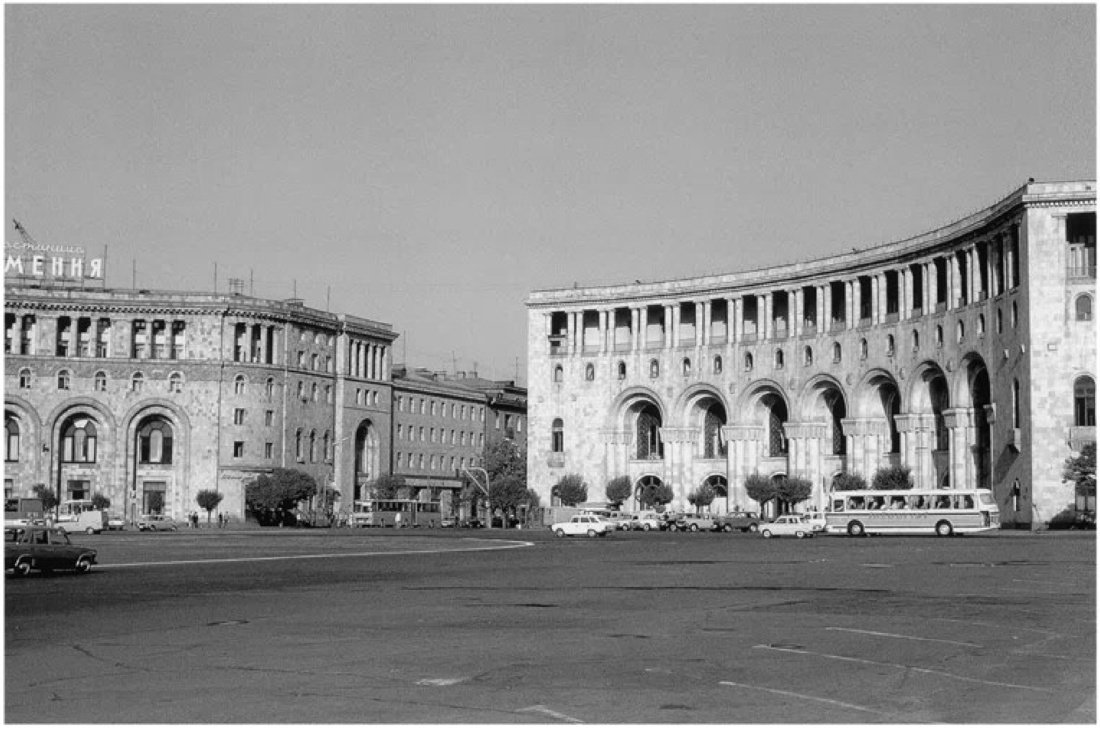
27 Echmiadzin: a monument to the Armenian victims of the 1915 Turkish atrocities, its design emulating the traditional carved stone crosses, called in Armenian *khachkar*s.



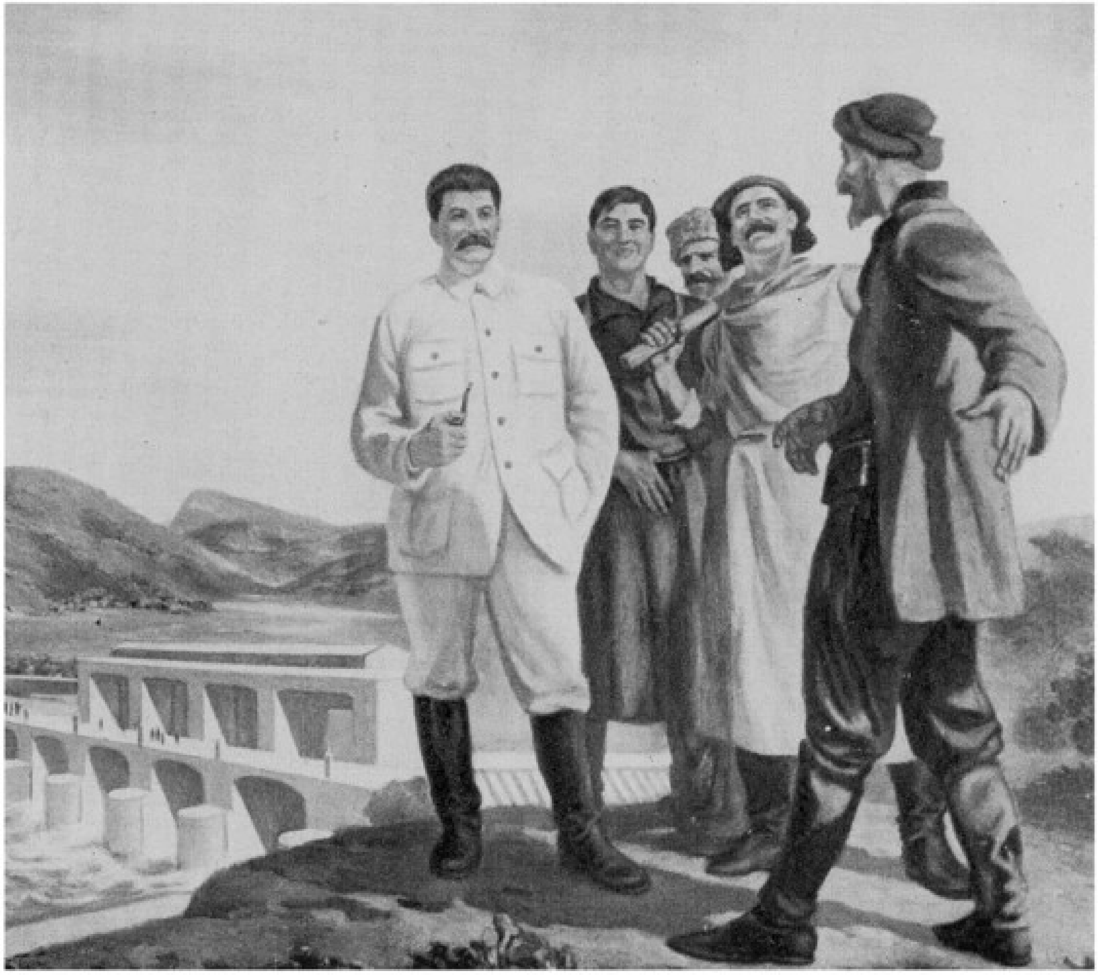
28 Chechens at Ami village, dressed in winter gear, finger their daggers as they watch the artist (early twentieth century).



29 Mount Ararat, where, according to legend, Noah's Ark, built to save living things from the Flood, came aground. For centuries Armenia's territory, including Mount Ararat, had stretched from 37 to 49 °east and from 37.5 to 41.5 °north (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, 11 vols., Leiden, 1954--2008, vol. I, p. 634), but Turkey's seizure of north-western Armenia during the First World War put Ararat beyond bounds for Armenians. Thereafter the inept policies of the Western allies ignored the Turkish nationalist government's slaughter of Armenians in Cilicia and its seizure of still more Armenian territory. Bolshevik Russia supported (weakly) the Armenians’ rights, but many were excluded from their ancestral land, including the biblical mountain whose twin summits for them were sacred, but could now be viewed only on a distant horizon, as in this photograph.

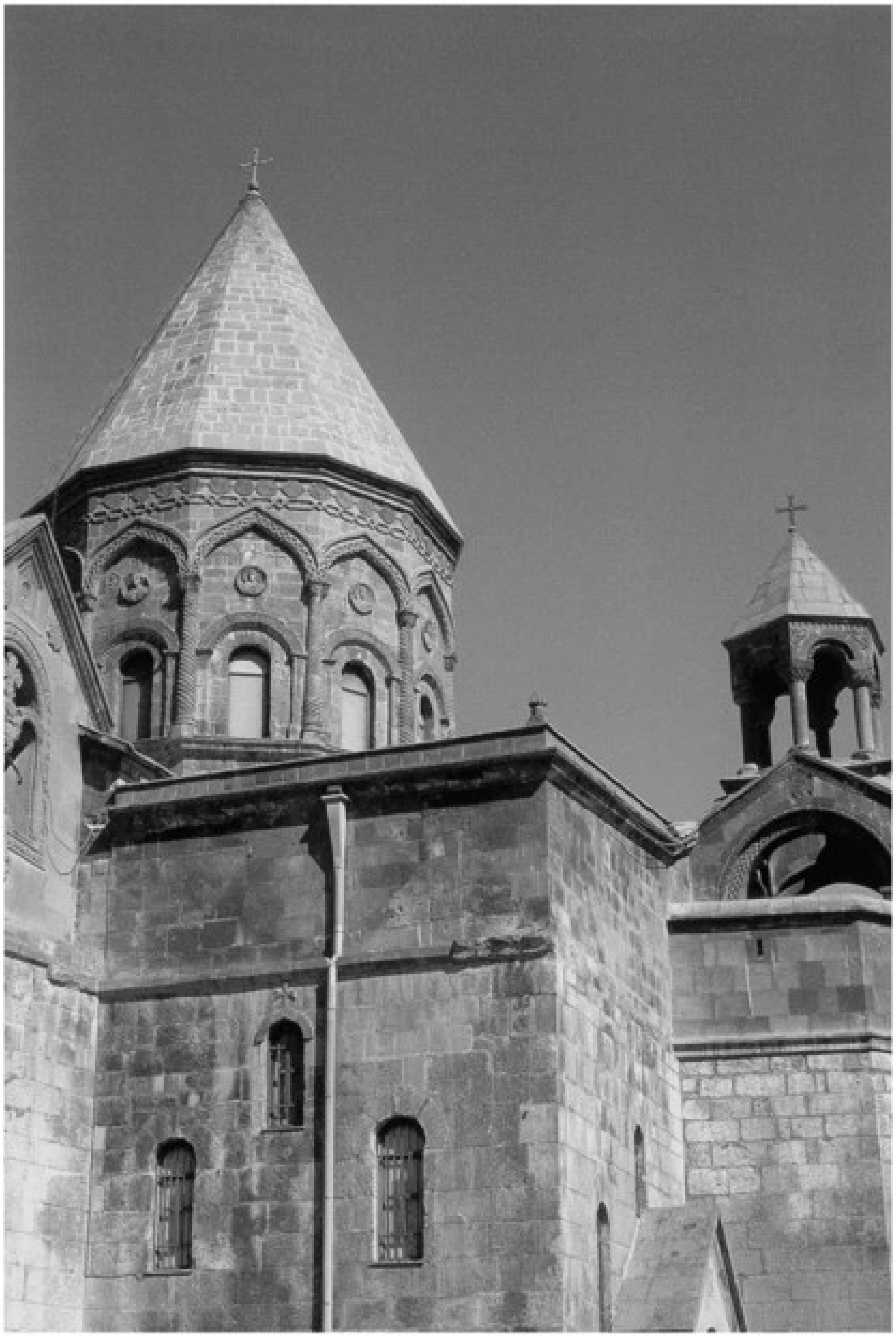


30 Yerevan – the grandiose central square, originally Lenin Square. Construction, much of it in the local stone, pink tufa, began in 1926–41, and was completed after the Second World War. It brings together government buildings, museums, art galleries, the central post office, the Hotel Armenia and an ostentatious display of many fountains in what had originally been a parched city.



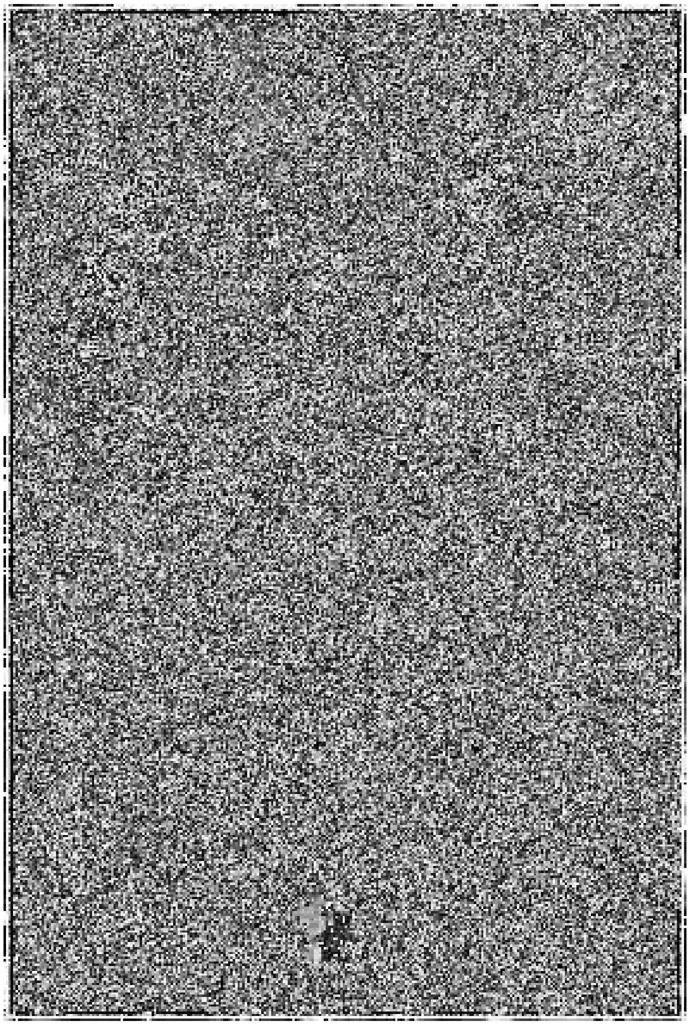
31 A typical Soviet propaganda painting by the Georgian painter I. M. Toidze of Stalin visiting a newly constructed hydroelectric dam on the river Rioni in 1935.

32 North Caucasus under German occupation in 1942: Kuban Cossacks dancing for German officers, including General H. von Pannwitz, Lieut.-Colonel I. N. Kononov and General Andrey Shkuro, the anti-Bolshevik former leader of the Circassians in the Russian Civil War.



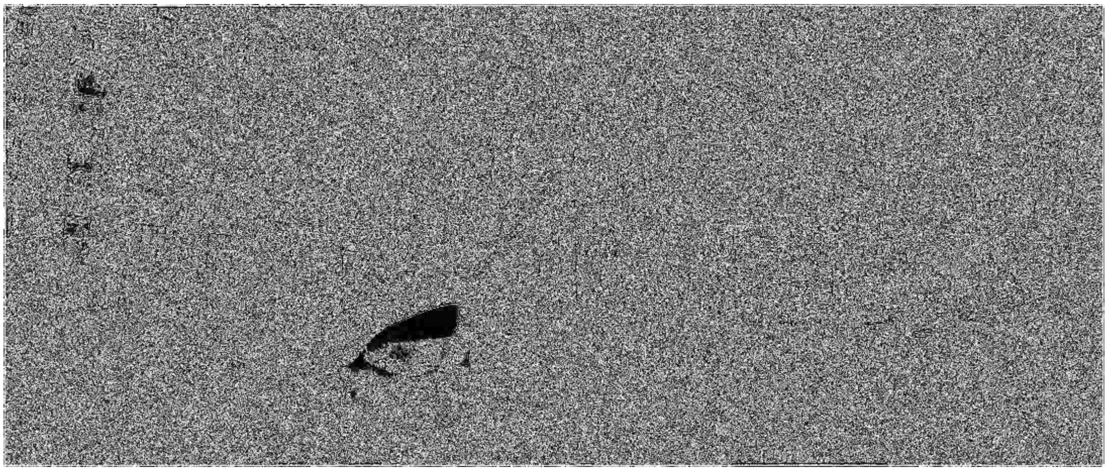
33 Echmiadzin – the metropolis of the Armenian--Gregorian Church, some 15 miles west of Yerevan. The cathedral was built mainly in the 480s, but this main dome and belfry date from the seventeenth century.

34 Vazgen I (1908–94), Patriarch-Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, 1955–94. Born and baptized in Budapest, with the West Armenian name Garabed Baljian, he was invited to Echmiadzin as catholicos of all Armenians, but had to compromise with the Russian authorities, while working with the Armenian secular authorities and supporting their stand against the Azerbaijanian occupation of Highland Karabagh.



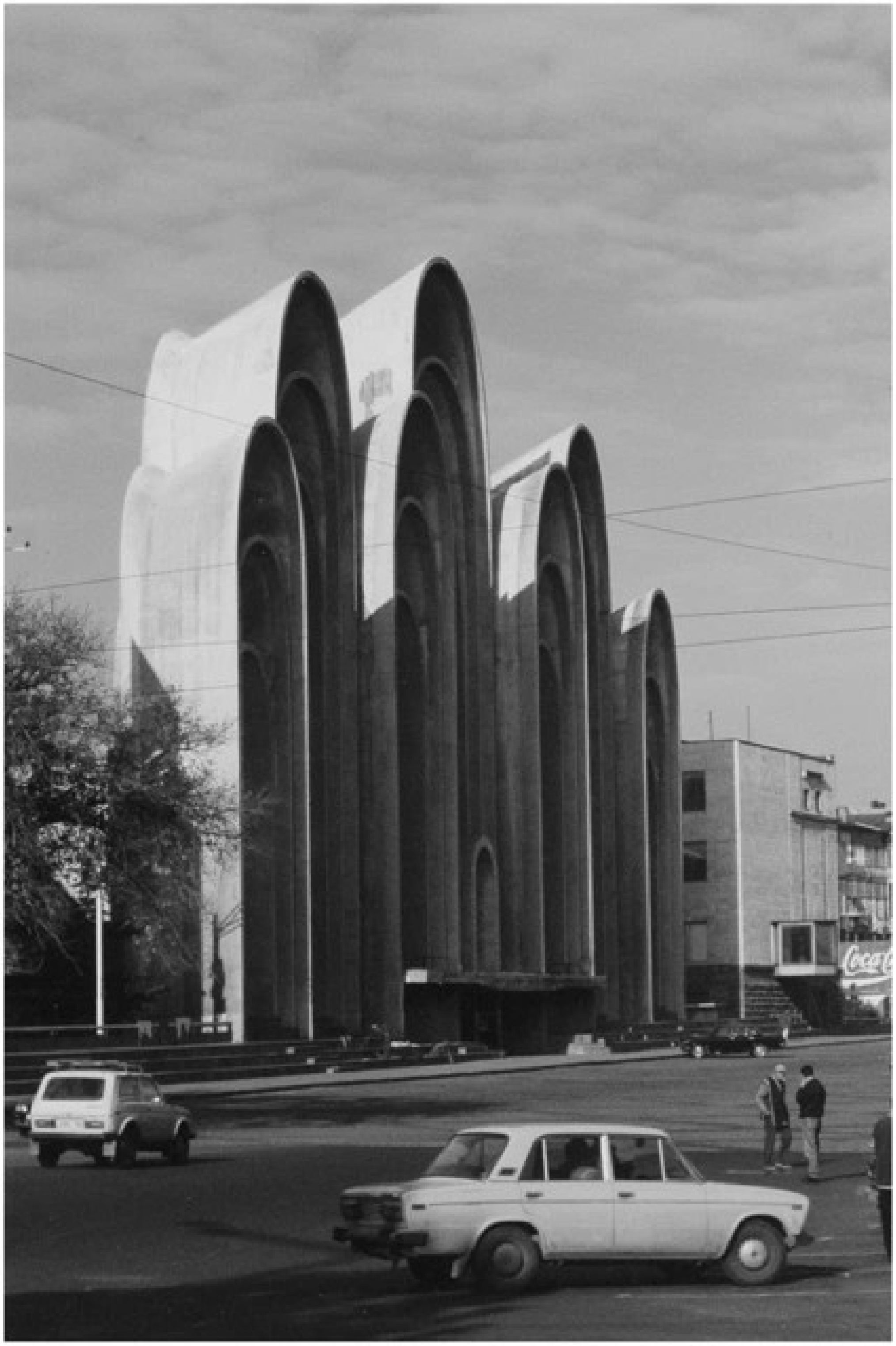
35 Jauhar Dudayev in Soviet Air Force general's uniform, after becoming president of Chechenia and declaring its independence in November 1990. With continuous interference by Boris Yeltsin's Moscow government, the Chechen state faced increasing economic and political chaos, including attacks by Chechen oppositionists receiving secret financial support and armed collaboration from Russia's corrupt secret police. From December 1994 Chechenia's capital, Groznyy, suffered encirclement by Russian troops, who regularly assaulted and murdered Chechens. Dudayev was killed by a Russian rocket guided electronically to his mobile telephone as he visited a

Chechen village in April 1996 (see A. Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*, New Haven, 1998, pp. 58–69).



36 When the Chechens persistently refused to resubmit to Moscow's rule, the Russians subjected their capital city, Groznyy, to ruthless destruction, leaving many districts reduced to rubble by intensive aerial bombing and artillery and rocket bombardment from Christmas 1994 to November 1996. Nor did the Russians' diabolical destruction stop there: the countryside was riddled with landmines, and hardly a single Chechen village or farm survived the systematic demolition by ruthless gunfire.

37 Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili attends an award ceremony at the defence ministry in Tbilisi, 17 September 2008.



38 ‘Andropov's Ears’. After Georgia's ‘Rose revolution’ in November 2003, many of Tbilisi's street names were changed from the customary Soviet ‘Lenin Street’, ‘Karl Marx

Square’, ‘Komsomol Alley’, ‘Stalin Embankment’, etc. to ‘Liberty Square’, ‘Queen Tamar Avenue’, ‘Saakadze Avenue’, ‘King David the Builder Avenue’ and so on. Such alterations were officially decreed, but at least one name was adopted without sanction a decade before, referring to a building in the capital's Lenin Square (the biggest) which was the scene of Soviet-Russian nationalist military parades marking the anniversary of Lenin's October Revolution. This towering saluting base was quickly dubbed ‘Andropov's Ears’ after the head of the secret police, Yu. V. Andropov, who in 1982 briefly became president of the USSR until his death in 1984.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

AN SSSR
Akademiya Nauk SSSR (USSR Academy of Sciences)

ASN
Association for the Study of Nationalities

CDSP
Current Digest of the Soviet Press

RA
Rossiyskaya Akademiya Nauk (Rossiyan Academy of Sciences)

RFE/RL
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: weekly news reports called successively *Research Bulletin* (until 1988), *Radio Liberty Research* (1989–91), *Report on the USSR*, *Research Report*, *News Briefs* (1992–3)

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Moskovskiye novosti
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^{c}Abu Muhammad ^{c}Ahmad ibn A^{c}sam al-Kufi, *Kitāb al-futukh: Kniga zavoyevaniy (izvlecheniya po istorii Azerbaydzhana VII–IX vv.)*, translated from Arabic by Z. M. Buniyatov, Baku, 1981.

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